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THE GOSPEL OF WORK:

FOUR LECTURES
ON CHRISTIAN ETHICS

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THESE lectures, which were given to Extension Students in the Divinity School during the Cambridge Summer Meeting of 1902, are now printed in the form in which they were delivered. It seemed to me that it might be of interest to the audience, if attention were specially directed to the work of some Cambridge theologians; and illustrative quotations have been drawn chiefly, though not of course exclusively, from their writings. In an appendix I have added three occasional sermons, which deal with points that are raised, but not discussed, in the lectures themselves.

W. C.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

16 *August*, 1902.

**Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord
from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that
they may rest from their labours; and their
works do follow them.**

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INTRODUCTION.

WHICHCOTE, by insisting that morality rests on natural reason, left the impression that differences in religious belief are of minor importance as regards conduct. But though Christian morality is similar to that of the professors of other religions in many ways, especially in the things they all condemn, it differs in its view of duty and the motives and manner of doing it. Christian teaching on the everyday duty of doing our work has a unique character and is quite distinct from that which is associated with other religions . . . 1—6

DIVINE VOCATION AND THE DIGNITY OF WORK.

The duty of work may not seem at first sight to have much religious significance, and there are many pious men who are hardly conscious of a close connection between their work and their beliefs. The fact that there is an intimate relationship may be brought out both

(a) by the consideration of the observances of primitive religion, which seem to embrace ritual survivals of actual labour; and

(b) from the fact that God is thought of as the supreme Worker both in Judaism and Christianity. The thought of God as a worker is not common to all the

higher religions, and is entirely alien to the spirit of Buddhism. Christianity recognises more clearly than Judaism that the object of divine working is supernatural and eternal.

Since man is made in the image of God, he is capable of realising his own ideal aims. He can only exercise this creative activity within narrow limits, and subject to many defects. The imperfection of his own work may sometimes breed a sense of disappointment and a curious sensitiveness to the judgments of others, as their recognition is the only available tribute to his personal genius, or power of working as God does. Some men, and notably the Hebrew Prophets, have realised that they were called to be the instruments through whom God worked. The dignity of this calling gave a grandeur to their characters which is curiously lacking in the poetic temperament.

Since we have a fuller knowledge of God's nature and of the range of His working in Christianity, it gives us a clearer view of the extent to which every man—and not merely a selected few—can aspire to be His fellow-worker. This is especially due to Christ's teaching about the Fatherhood of God, and the minuteness of His care for, and interest in, all His creatures. When we consider the aim of all human work, its dependence on physical conditions and the impossibility of dispensing with it, we see how closely man's work is related to the work of God both in Providence and in the Redemption of Mankind. In all his labour of every kind man may realise that he is a fellow-worker with God, but there is no other religion than Christianity in which this gospel of work has a place 7—29

THE DUTY OF DILIGENCE.

We are dealing with the duty of working personally, not with the justice of the arrangements in society, or the relations between one individual and another. The duty of working is a preliminary question ; and it is of more practical importance than any project for compelling certain classes to modify their action. In working there is an element of personal self-sacrifice, which does not occur in promulgating plans of social reconstruction, and this gives it reality.

1. Diligence is a duty to our neighbour ; but "who is my neighbour?" In the complication of modern society it is difficult to be aware who it is that uses the results of our labour ; by scamped work we injure an unknown neighbour. There is danger of leaving the user out of sight altogether and thinking of work as contracted for by an employer. Hard bargains seem to offer an excuse for trying to correct injustice by inefficiency, but this is to perpetrate a new wrong.

2. Diligence as a duty to God is discussed at length by Barrow in his sermons on Industry. He insists that the gentleman is specially obliged to industry by the advantages with which he is endowed, and points out the various employments he may undertake. It is in relation to God that we see the universality of the obligation most clearly ; leisure gives a man scope to choose his work, but it does not annul the obligation to be diligent. The heinousness of idleness can be gauged when we see what reason others have to deplore their lack of opportunity to make the most of their lives.

3. Diligence in our business is also a duty to ourselves, since we thereby submit to a needed discipline.

Work formed a regular part of monastic discipline at a time when it was difficult to recognise that it was possible, outside a cloister, to consecrate daily occupations to the service of God. There are, however, plausible excuses put forward for evading this discipline (*a*) by those who despise rural or manual labour as degrading, and (*b*) by those who pursue the Humanist ideal. Diligence in work involves concentration and limitation, and is not consistent with the conscious effort after all-round self-development. But this Humanist aim is inconsistent with Christian doctrine, which insists on man's dependence on, and obligation to, his fellow-men. By accepting the limitations of his lot a man may find his true relations to God, to the world, and to his fellow-men, and thus realise his true life 29—54

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH WORK IS DONE.

Man as a worker is brought into relation not only with the things He has made, but with God Himself; he is called on (1) to adopt God's Will in forming his intentions, and (2) to submit himself and all he does to God's judgment.

1. Diligence is not the only duty to be taken into account; we must also consider the spirit in which work is done. This may be undertaken for its own sake, as if it were an end in itself; or pursued on merely personal grounds in the hope of gain. We should try to correct the latter tendency, by merging the self-regarding motives in some larger aim that takes us out of ourselves. It is not easy to devise an object that shall attract us powerfully, but religion appeals to our feelings and the Love

of God is an attractive force, while it also stirs us to self-forgetful action in the ordinary duties of life.

In the Old Testament, religious ideas are brought to bear to re-enforce common-sense morality; this is obviously true of the exhortations to diligence; but such religion has no power to transform the spirit in which work is done. If the whole of life is consecrated by the conscious intention to please God, work can be undertaken, not as drudgery, but heartily and as unto the Lord. Slaves are driven to work by fear, but freemen labour in the hope of a reward; and the opening up of the Christian hope may take the burdensomeness and bitterness out of the duties of life.

In the seventeenth century there was a tendency to revert to Old Testament habits of thought and a consequent lowering of the standard of traditional morality. Men are apt to acquiesce in mere common-sense maxims about diligence; if we would rise to a higher morality we must seek by prayer to enter into intercourse with God, and thus learn to lay aside all aims that are out of accordance with His Will.

The Monastic system was devised as the best sphere for the cultivation of the devout spirit, in its two sides of labour and prayer. Though it has done good service in the past, it has ceased to rouse admiration or to commend Christianity to the world. There may be a danger of shirking the duties of our position if we retire too much from the world, and we shall do well to recognise the possibility and study the means of consecrating our secular life 54—88

THE APPRECIATION OF WORK.

2. Though a man is in some ways the best critic of his own work, there is need of an outside judgment to decide whether the work is worth doing at all, and as to its quality. For some purposes the decision of posterity is conclusive, but we cannot forecast it so as to profit by it. The religious man will consciously submit his work to the judgment of God, and there are certain indications as to the principles of His approval and censure.

The Christian ideal of conduct is so high that it seems to be impracticable ; but even if it transcends our experience, it serves as an incentive to progress ; while it also is the source of true humility, a much misunderstood virtue, which is exemplified in the character of S. Paul.

According to the Christian conception, the Divine judgment is pronounced on the man personally, but his works are the best evidence as to his character ; they testify to his efforts.

The work may also be judged in itself and not merely as relative to the worker. All actions done in the service of man are good, but some are better worth doing than others. In ordinary life we can apply the criterion as to whether work will last ; the material objects in which services are embodied may wear out or rust out or be superseded, but there is a permanent and reproductive power in the service which influences human minds.

Personal influence, in regard to particular kinds of skill, is strong among contemporaries but is not always easily transmitted : while personal influence on character is much wider in its scope, and can be put on record so as to afford an undying stimulus. We may thus see that

the best service of man is not in conferring physical boons, but in the encouragement given to better conduct ; and this may be treasured by preserving the memory of worthy lives.

The ethical principles, which have been laid down in regard to the activities of life, also hold good when they are applied to the duty and influence of those who are called to suffer 88—108

CONCLUSION.

Christianity has unique teaching to give about the duty of work and the manner of doing it, while it brings the highest motives to bear on the trivial routine of life. In this it is unlike other religions ; and any disparagement of religious institutions, as matters of indifference in regard to morality, appears to be unjustified. The mistake of the Cambridge Rational Theologians on this point was due to their neglect of the heart and accentuation of the mind and intellect.

The tendency affected their doctrine in many ways, and limited their influence. Philosophically it took them out of touch with actuality, and led to a Mysticism which made insufficient account of individual existence or particular external duties.

In religion it tended to the overvaluing of preaching as the chief means through which Christian truth could be presented to and assimilated by the individual mind.

It also indisposed them to the accurate study of the actual course of the past.

Those who are most attracted by them will do well to be warned by their failure. Differences in religion are

real; it is futile to ignore them. It seems wiser to take all differences seriously, by (*a*) treating all conscientious convictions with respect, and trying to agree on common principles for testing (*b*) the rightness of individual opinions, and (*c*) the fruitfulness of religious ordinances and institutions 108—120

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INTRODUCTION.

MORE than once in the history of the University a remarkable movement has emanated from the pulpit of Trinity Church in this town. In many of our minds it is associated with the work of Charles Simeon and the Evangelical Revival. If we go back to the seventeenth century, we find that it was from the same centre that Benjamin Whichcote, the Provost of King's, disseminated the teaching by which the Cambridge Platonists harmonised religion and philosophy. The precise position of this group of thinkers may be most accurately gathered from the elaborate treatises of Cudworth and More. But Whichcote sounded the departure from current modes of thought by his preaching; he appears to have been a leader among his contemporaries and to have done much to mould the opinions of the rising generation. When speaking at his funeral, Tillotson recalled

his own old days at Clare College, and described the impression Whichcote had made. "Every Sunday in the afternoon for almost twenty years together, he preached in Trinity Church where he had a great number, not only of the young scholars, but of those of greater standing and best repute for learning in the university, his constant and attentive hearers, and in those wild unsettled times, contributed more to the forming of the students of that university to a sober sense of religion, than any man in that age¹." Whichcote wrote no formal exposition of his views and nothing was printed during his lifetime; but some of the men who had sat at his feet were eager to gather up his aphorisms and the notes of his discourses and gave them posthumous publication. He had been brought up in the Puritan camp², but he was wearied with the dialectical skill of theological controversialists, and insisted on the supreme importance of morality in religion. "There are but two things in religion; morals and institutions. Morals may be known by

¹ *Sermon preached at the Funeral of the Rev. B. Whichcote, May 24th, 1683, p. 24.*

² Tulloch, *Rational Theology in England in the XVII Century*, 49.

“the reason of the thing. Morals are owned as soon as spoken, and they are nineteen parts in twenty of all religion..... All the differences in Christendom are about institutions not about morals¹.” He had a high appreciation of the grandeur of spiritual truth as it appealed in all times and places to man’s intellectual nature so as to ennoble his ideas. “Worship God in Spirit,” he says, “i.e., in the motion of the mind and understanding; in the free, full, noble, ingenious use of a man’s highest powers and faculties. To serve God with the determination of the understanding, and the freeness of choice; first to judge and then to choose. This is the immutable religion of God’s creation; the service of angels and men, self-established, not depending upon institution, indispensable; the religion of the state of innocency; and there is nothing beyond this in the state of glory but as perfected there².” By contrast he regarded institutions, even when divine, as of a more temporary character; the Jewish ordinances

¹ *Moral and Religious Aphorisms collected from the Manuscript papers of the Reverend and Learned Dr Whichcote and published by Dr Jeffery, republished by Dr Salter (1753), 586, 588.*

² *Ibid.* 762.

could not pretend to any universality. "Religion "has different denominations and names from "different actions and circumstances, but it is "one thing, universal righteousness, accordingly "it had place at all times before the law of "Moses." With him, and still more with his disciple Tillotson, this assertion of the fundamental importance of natural religion, leads to a disparagement of "the instituted part of any "religion" as altogether subordinate. According to the archbishop, "natural religion is the foundation of instituted and revealed religion, and "all revealed religion does suppose and take for "granted the clear and undoubted principles and "precepts of natural religion, and builds upon "them¹." Even though he insisted that "Christianity is as well framed to make men good "as any religion can be imagined to be²," he would have regarded its specific influence as merely supplementary to that of the truths furnished by Nature. From this standpoint it is but an easy step to the position which was taken by the eighteenth-century deists

¹ Tillotson, Sermon XLIX., *Instituted Religion not intended to undermine Natural*, in *Works*, II. 307.

² Tillotson, Sermon LXV., *The prejudice against Jesus and his religion considered*, in *Works*, II. 417.

who held that with respect to practical conduct generally, all religions are pretty much alike; since all advocate similar duties and endeavour to enforce them under similar sanctions. Our increasing acquaintance with the Sacred Books of the East has supplied so much evidence as to the high morality which is cultivated among non-heathen peoples, as to raise the question whether Christianity has any decided superiority in this respect. A little enquiry will convince us that there is a considerable consensus of opinion, in many parts of the world, and among the professors of very different faiths, as to the action that is wrong, and the habits of mind which are to be condemned. The case is somewhat altered, however, when we turn our attention to ideals of right, and examine what inspiration different faiths afford for the positive doing of duty. From this point of view Christianity stands by itself; nothing could be farther from my thoughts than to disparage the virtues of men of other creeds; we may find in many of them examples of earnestness in striving to realise their ideal. But for all that, we shall do well to recognise that Christian morality is in many ways different from other morality¹ and

¹ W. E. H. Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, i. 330.

to try and detect its distinctive characteristics. As Rothe¹ points out, the devout Christian is conscious of definite and personal relations with God, and this gives a special character to the results obtained by the analysis of his consciousness.

From any point of view this is an interesting enquiry. Even if the Religions of the World are merely of interest to us as a special group of sociological phenomena, we shall find it worth while to try and describe them accurately and classify them satisfactorily. The resemblances between the maxims which are current in one high civilisation and another are obvious, but by trying to formulate the differences we can hope to obtain more definite knowledge, and to make our notions of Christian and of other ethics more precise. It is only when the distinctions are clearly realised that we come to be in a position to compare the various systems intelligently, or to be able to apply any criterion as to whether the morality associated with a particular creed is high or low. At all events we can here find a convenient starting-point from which to approach the topic which is to engage our attention.

¹ *Theologische Ethik*, I. 14.

DIVINE VOCATION AND THE DIGNITY OF WORK.

SOME of us may perhaps be inclined to think that religion has very little to do with the matter at all. Work is such a very mundane affair, it seems to lie in a different sphere altogether. The immediate objects of work are of the earth, earthy; the concentration of thought and effort on mere toil seems to condemn us to somewhat sordid drudgery, while the very meaning of religion is to help man to realise his relations with the eternal and spiritual world and thus to raise him from what is gross and material to larger interests, and a nobler life. In all probability it is perfectly true that for many deeply pious people, the obligation to diligence in business has never been brought into any conscious connection with their religious aspirations. Such inability to recognise the intimate relationship between these two sides of life is a personal defect which must have prejudicial effects both on a man's

religion and on his work. For the two are most closely and deeply intertwined together, and we are the losers if we allow ourselves to sever them and let them fall asunder.

The close connection which subsists between religion and work is clear enough, whether we consider primitive races or the higher and more spiritual faiths. It is obvious that many of the religious observances of the less advanced peoples have originated in action and songs associated with their work. Human activity expresses itself in many forms, especially when many persons are putting forth similar efforts with a common object in view. There is a great deal of agricultural labour which is done rhythmically, while the workers encourage one another by songs, which are fitted to the movements of the hands or the feet. The scene in the fields near a village in the province of Georgia¹, when the women and girls are hoeing the maize to the sound of a loud and continuous song, seems to be almost like a dance; and it is natural that the gestures and songs should be retained in their festivals. The ritual survival in worship of movements and exclamations that had originated in the actual cultivation of the soil

¹ Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, 250.

or preparation of its products need not surprise us. The transference of the action involved in treading the grapes to be part of the Dionysiac celebrations¹ is a case in point, and some of the rites in the worship of the Earth goddess in Sicily appear to have been similarly derived. In the cults of the primitive peoples, there is the propitiation of particular forms of the power of Nature on which the success of all tillage depends; and the links which connect their animistic beliefs and their work in the fields is brought to light by their ritual observances.

The association of religion with the appropriate work of the different seasons of the year is not confined to primitive peoples, who reverence particular spirits or particular manifestations of the productive power of Nature. It is found, not merely in the passionate orgies of the Canaanites, but in the ordinances of the Israelites as well. With the rise of monotheistic beliefs, however, the character and meaning of such observances was entirely changed. To the pious Israelite there was an underlying unity in the whole of nature, and all its bounties were to be traced to the same source. There was one God who had brought them out of the

¹ Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, 360.

land of Egypt with signs and wonders, and guided them through the wilderness, and strengthened them in battle, so that they had obtained the good land He had promised. The recurring seed-time and harvest were guaranteed by His promise to Noah; the enjoyment of their own fields was assured by His covenant with Abraham; and the import of their festivals was thankfulness to God for His covenanted mercies. Even if their rites and observances are similar, there is the greatest contrast between the thoughts and habits of those who worship particular manifestations of natural power and the faith of those who recognise an eternal and spiritual being ruling over all material things and bending them to His Will.

Yet even here, in the noble religious thought which is enshrined in the Old Testament, there is the closest connection between the thought of God and of work; religion furnishes an ideal which can be brought to bear on common things because the Eternal God Himself is revered as a worker. The Bible opens with a description of the six days' work of the Creator,—successive visions of divine activity in calling into being all that is; and the belief that His overruling hand continues to govern the world He

has made, comes out in every page of the Old Testament. The activities of nature are portrayed as the works of God's Providence. The omnipotent God is revealed to us in these pages as not merely the creator at the beginning, but as a sustainer from day to day and hour to hour. "Others," as Roger Hutchinson¹ writes, "grant God to be maker of all things: but they suppose that, as the shipwright, when he hath made the ship, leaveth it to the mariners, and meddleth no more therewith; and as the carpenter leaveth the house that he hath made; even so God, after he had formed all things, left all his creatures to their own governance, or to the governance of the stars; not ruling the world after his providence, but living in ease and quietness, as the Stoics, Epicures, and divers astrologers; because it is written, that on the seventh day God rested from all his works.

"To these I answer, with the prophet David: God covereth the heaven with clouds, prepareth rain for the earth, maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, giveth fodder unto the cattle, maketh fast the bars of the gates of Sion, blesseth the children within, maketh peace

¹ *The Image of God, or layman's book*, in *Works*, p. 69.

“in our borders, filleth us with the flour of wheat,
“giveth us snow like wool, scattereth the hoar
“frost like ashes, casteth forth his ice like mor-
“sels, helpeth them to right that sustain wrong,
“looseth men out of prison, giveth sight to the
“blind, raiseth up them that are fallen, careth for
“strangers, defendeth the fatherless, succoureth
“the widow:” wherefore He is not an idle God.
For as the body liveth through the life of the
soul, even so the world continueth by God’s
governance who ruleth it as the master doth
his servant; without whom it perisheth in the
twinkling of an eye. “All things wait upon him
“to receive food in due season. When he giveth
“it them, they gather it; when he openeth his
“hand, they are filled with good things; when
“he hideth his face, they are sorrowful; if he
“take away his breath they die, and are turned
“again to dust.” In Him we live and move
and have our being, and physical life is an
expression of the unending continuous activity
of the God who never slumbers nor sleeps, but
watches over His people. “God never leaves
“off working; but just as it is the nature of
“fire to burn and of snow to chill, so is it too
“of God to work; and that so much the more
“because he himself is the source of energy in

"all other things¹." It was recognised by the Jewish theologians that though rest has been enjoined for men on one day in seven there is no cessation of divine activity on the Sabbath Day,—that the sun rises and sets, and that the growth of vegetable and animal life continues unchecked. And this unceasing activity, as they conceived it, was directed by the highest wisdom. There may be exuberance of life that takes pleasure in the mere display of power, like the play of a child, or is even ruthless and destructive. But the Israelite in ascribing Wisdom and Righteousness to God recognised that the power which rules the Universe is neither unthinking nor capricious. And the condition thus attained by the Israelites has never lost its hold on the Christian consciousness. It was presupposed in the beginnings of scientific study; it affords the means of co-ordinating the results that have been attained. There is

one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

In the story of the world, as we know it, there is not a mere chaotic whirl; it is not even a steadily

¹ Philo Judaeus, *Sacrarum Legum Allegoriarum*, Lib. 1. p. 41.

recurring round according to a definitely fixed order; there is change and growth and progress. We can trace this in part in the evolution of higher forms of life,—in the specific characteristics and keen intelligence that has been cultivated in the struggle for existence. We can mark it too in the story of our race,—in the development of new social organisms and better institutions for moulding individual character and regulating the relations which subsist among men. There is stability in the Universe, order and uniformity in Nature, since with God there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning; but there has been progress in the past, and there will as we believe be progress in the future, because we reverence the Supreme Power in the Universe as a Worker, exerting activity towards an end He has in view, and controlling all that passes for the accomplishment of His Will. This is the very meaning of work—activity directed consciously to a definite result; and herein lies the reason why we can rightly speak of God as the Supreme Worker.

“Every workman,” to quote the language of Sterry¹, a Fellow of Emmanuel, who was often

¹ *Discourse of the Freedom of the Will*, 51.

called on to preach before Cromwell, "according
"to the measure of his reason and wisdom hath
"in himself, before he beginneth to work, the
"form and perfection of his work. This is the
"end which first moveth the agent, and setteth
"him on work. This is the reason, the rule of
"his works, which giveth him both life to it and
"light in it.....Thus the workman works by
"wisdom, for his God teacheth him. Shall not
"the only wise God much more work in wis-
"dom? Shall not He have the form of that
"work, which He intendeth, perfect and plain,
"with all its proportions in His Spirit, before
"He beginneth it? Shall not He have His
"end, the pattern, the principle, the reason and
"the rule of His work in Himself? Or doth
"He work blindly or by chance? Or is He
"enlivened or enlightened from without for His
"work? Doth He not form the treasure and
"measure of all harmony in His own mind, give
"to it its proportions and perfections?"

There are many religious men to whom it is rather a shock to think of God as working; it seems to be derogatory to His Majesty. These minds turn to God as a deliverer from this evil world and its struggle; they like to think of Him as apart from all the round of

trouble and perplexity and pain, as infinitely above it all and leading a life which cannot be touched by the feeling of infirmities. The greatest of the religious teachers of the East gave expression to this view; and Buddhists cherish no other hope than so to live that they may be at length lost in the silent, undying, unchanging life of God. Their constant endeavour is to keep themselves from all the strain and turmoil of the world, that they may attain to extinction at last. But however pure and beautiful such an ideal may seem, it cannot give such inspiration for active work in the world as can be drawn from Jewish and Christian Theology. From the first page of the Bible to the last, God is set before us as a worker, not as enjoying a contemplative existence by Himself and alone, but working and striving to accomplish the good of His creatures. And this conception of the Divine Life has had no slight influence on the ideals of human life. For that which men hail as the holiest and best will be the model after which they try to order their lives. As Christians, we cannot be content with the thought of an unsullied life, apart from all activity and aspiration. We have realised that, as Roosevelt says, the "law of worthy life

"is fundamentally the law of strife; it is only
"through labour and painful effort and grim
"energy and resolute courage that we move on
"to higher things."

So far as we have gone, we may notice that Judaism and Christianity have much in common, since both reverence an Eternal God who works unweariedly. Yet, even for the matter with which we are concerned, there is a remarkable difference between the faith of Israel and the doctrine of Christ. The Jewish conception of the end for which God is working was narrow and restricted; it was confined by the conditions of mundane existence¹, and was inseparably combined with the destiny of a particular race; with all the modifications of the Messianic expectation it does not seem that the kingdom of God for which they looked transcended these limits. But through the life of Christ we have learned to think of the end towards which God is working as in itself supernatural, and as lying beyond the range of our experience altogether. It is, as S. Paul says, that God may be all in all²; that all

¹ The same criticism may be urged in regard to Mohammedanism: on the lack of influence of this religion on social life, see Cunningham, *Essay on Western Civilisation*, II. 118.

² 1 Corinthians xv. 28.

creation may become the manifestation of the goodness and love of the Creator, that the divine ideal of the Universe, the divine ideal of man, may be realised, not in the changing sphere of time, but eternally. We cannot but be struck by the rapture with which S. Paul writes; he speaks as if his countrymen were groping with difficulty after the divine will, while he had gained through the Gospel a clearer insight into the genuine secrets of the great Architect of the Universe. He might not be able to solve all difficulties, but at least he had caught a glimpse of the plan, and the world with all its perplexities had ceased to be unintelligible.

Even apart however from the fuller light that is given by Christianity on God's purpose and the possibilities of human existence, the belief in God as the Supreme Worker has had extraordinary influence in affecting men's thoughts about their own work. Man is made in the image of God, and is conscious that he too has the marvellous power of selecting an ideal object, and directing his energies so as to render it actual. By his faculties of thought and will he is endowed with dominion over the earth and its products and the brute creation,

and he can influence them so that they shall do his bidding. That he has such power is the secret of the dignity which attaches to man and distinguishes him from other creatures; and his consciousness of this status affects his attitude and his claims.

There are spheres in which we habitually recognise that man is endowed with power like that of God. We speak of the creative power of a great artist. Some vision of beauty has taken hold of him, and he strives to give it expression in the terms at his command. It may be portrayed on canvas for the eye to see, or embodied in harmonies that appeal to the ear. Whatever form it takes, we admire the thought and feeling that has stirred within him and cherish the thing of beauty he has wrought as a joy for ever.

There are other and larger spheres in which the creative activity of man may work. Who shall gauge the influence that has been exercised by great moral teachers who have as it were stamped their personality on the habits of their people for generations? of such a man as Confucius, whose maxims have moulded the practice of the millions of China for centuries? Great law-givers, who have formulated con-

ceptions of right and justice, or who have organised institutions for the good government of their people, have left an abiding witness to the influence of their personal genius. Wherever we discern this power we cannot but admire it, for we feel that the man, who has it, exercises within his range, whatever it may be, a creative, dominating activity like that of God Himself.

But after all, human genius, however marvellous it may be, works within very narrow limits; it is dependent on so many conditions. Part of the praise we bestow on some artist is to remark on the wonderful effect he produced when we take account of the resources at his disposal. And the contribution which any single individual can make to progress in the sense of beauty or the power of realising it is very small. Every generation borrows much from those who went before and adds but little of its own; and every artist, however much inspired, has been in a sense the product of his age, and has been affected in his ways of thinking and habits of working by the fashion of the time. The range of personal genius is after all so limited, the restrictions on it are many. At its best and greatest it is, though similar, hopelessly beneath the activity of God Himself. The con-

trast is brought out very strikingly in the phrase which tells us how God saw everything that He had made and it was very good¹. For man can never have complete satisfaction even in his best achievement. Relatively to what others have done, or to what he himself has done at another time, he may feel that he has accomplished something better, perhaps the best of its kind. Yet there are touches it seems to lack. As the days and weeks go on the critical perception of the imperfections that lurk in what he has done becomes stronger. In all human success there must be an underlying sense of disappointment, the hope of doing something better if time and opportunity serve.

The limitations of human genius are the secret of the recurring disappointment which seems to infuse a flavour of bitterness into the poetic temperament. Men, who are too honest to be blind to their own faults, may be pained to find that their best is no better; and that they cannot always maintain the level they occasionally reach. Others, who perhaps distrust their own judgment, may be nervously sensitive to the opinion of a public, whether large or small. They crave for such recog-

¹ Genesis i. 31.

nition as may reassure them that the spark of genius burns within and that the thing they have felt and thought raises an echo in other breasts. This sensitiveness to the judgment of others seems to be so pitiable, but it has been the infirmity of many noble minds. The self-questioning spirit may blight the energies of men who have capacity enough to achieve great success. The power of perception is often associated with a longing to put forth creative power in some degree. A man, who delights in the works of God in nature, may be aware that he himself is like God a discerner of good and evil, and believe that he can like God bring forth in material shape some beautiful form that he has himself devised. To be as God in his working,—to show creative power and put forth the best that is in him,—that seems to be the greatest ambition to which man naturally aspires; and it is only from the recognition of his fellow-men that he can reassure himself that he has attained this high dignity.

There is, however, an entirely different relation in which man may place himself to God and His work. With the artist, who aspires to realise his own ideas, we may contrast the prophet who is content to be the servant of the

Lord and to utter His thoughts. One artist after another has striven to work as God does, however much he might feel that his achievements were feeble and imperfect. The prophet has been content to help in carrying out God's perfect work, and to be the instrument through which He accomplishes His design. The temperament of the prophet, as we see it portrayed over and over again in the Old Testament, is so different from that of the genius. Such a man as Moses, or Isaiah, disclaimed any sense of capacity, and seems to have had no wish to make a mark in the world; but was merely willing to carry God's message as best he could. The prophets were men who would have said that they had no great wisdom of their own, but who had come to apprehend the thoughts of God, and served as voices to utter them to the world. Since they were conscious that they were called to speak for God, and to help on His work, there was little room in their minds for querulousness about themselves and the amount of appreciation they received. They did not care, as S. Paul says of himself¹, about man's judgment at all, or even about their own estimate of their own achievements. They

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

could but do their best and deliver their souls and speak the word, and leave the issue with God. The contrast between the grandeur of the prophetic character and the embittered self-consciousness of so many artists and poets becomes intelligible when we note that the genius claims to be uttering his own thoughts like a creator, while the prophet is content to be a fellow-worker with God.

It would take us very far afield, if we attempted to trace this thought in all its bearings; to Philo¹ it seemed to throw light on the whole mystery of man's nature. A mind bound to earth and chained to the flesh has been deemed worthy of participation in the Divine Spirit; and why? "Because God "in His goodness showers benefits on all, even "on the imperfect, challenging them to share in "His prowess and emulate it." In another aspect it is only a reassertion of the familiar truth that we are dependent on God in all we attempt. As Isaac Barrow puts it, "In all such "cases, when we do need any good thing, God "is said to be our helper and succourer to the "obtaining it; which doth imply that we must "co-operate with Him, and join our forces to

¹ *Sacrarum Legum Allegoriarum* Lib. I., p. 46.

“those which He doth afford ; so that as we can
“do nothing without Him, so He will do nothing
“without us ; yea, so that sometime we are said
“also to help God¹.” In Mrs Browning’s mind
the same thought raised a suggestion as to the
real meaning of poetic inspiration ;

When God helps all the workers for his world,
The singers shall have help of Him, not last.

The more we understand of the nature of
God and the range of His working, the more
shall we realise the extent to which it is possible
for man to have a share in doing God’s work.
Among the Israelites the sense of enjoying this
high dignity was limited to a few ; to a king
like David, specially called and anointed to rule
God’s people, or to the prophets who were sent
to declare God’s message to their generation².
But our Lord’s teaching about the Fatherhood
of God and His personal care for every detail of
every life, has thrown a new light both on the
nature of human work, and on the spirit in which
it may be done. Since all the trivialities of life

¹ I. Barrow, *Of Industry, in five discourses* (1693), in *Works*
edited by Napier, III. 354.

² Cicero’s doctrine of God’s providence was similar ; there
was divine care of individuals, but it did not extend to trivialities.
Magna di curant, parva neglegunt. De Nat. Deorum, II. 66.

and the petty drudgeries are steps in the progress towards one end, there is no sphere of human activity which is excluded from contributing towards the realisation of the divine purpose for the comfort and good of man.

All service ranks the same with God.

And there is no labourer, however humble, who may not be inspired at his toil by the child's proud consciousness that he is helping his Father. Under all circumstances he is called to co-operate with God in the service of man.

In this connection there are three characteristics of human work that are worth noting.

(a) Work involves the conception of mutual service; this seems to be implied even in primitive communities, and it is obvious at all events in higher civilisations. There are none of us whose daily tasks are entirely of our own making, they are determined by the needs of others. There is some demand made upon us which we try to meet; the direction of our activities is determined by the effort to cater for the requirements of others.

(b) In all that he does man merely co-operates; he cannot pursue an independent career. In the more arduous and common forms

of toil man's part is comparatively small. He only shapes and aids, as we so commonly say, what Nature¹ does. He sows the seed under favourable circumstances in a good exposure, and Nature supplies all else that is needed, till the time has come for man to gather the result. And in highly developed modern industry the same is true. Man only guides and controls a material force, be it steam or electricity, and brings it to bear on materials furnished by Nature; his part seems to be so small.

(c) And yet it is a necessary part, if human life is to be better than that of the beasts who are dependent on what Nature provides from season to season, and whose energies are occupied in satisfying their physical needs from day to day. Man's skill and enterprise can be brought to bear on Nature so that he can force her to do his bidding, and to be his servant, in the prosecution of ideal aims. By his ability the powers of Nature can be utilised so as to furnish the vast supplies which are needed for the maintenance of large and highly civilised communities in which free political institutions can develop and the arts and sciences can be cultivated.

¹ J. S. Nicholson, *Principles of Political Economy*, I. 66.

From this point of view we can see more clearly the relation between human work—in its aim, and its dependence, and its necessity—and the work of God in the world as that is set before us in Christianity. We are taught to believe that the work of God in providence is directed to the good of His creatures, and to furnishing a sphere where man can realise all the possibilities of his nature. All human activity that renders the earth more fit for the sustenance of man and the development of his powers serves to carry on this side of God's work. But as the New Testament teaches us God's greatest work is not on the surroundings of man and the sphere where he lives, but in man himself; in his redemption from evil and transformation into the very character of God. That which is natural is first in time, but that which is spiritual is the final aim. And in this side of the divine working man has a share; there is much that God leaves to him. Those whose sympathy reaches out to their fellow-men and cheers them in their struggle after a higher life are fellow-workers with God. There is no aspect of the divine activity, in which the Supreme Worker does not turn to man and invite him to help.

Christianity holds out to us a gospel of work which has no place in other religions ; Christian Theology offers us guidance and inspiration as to the duties of everyday life for men in any station and calling. It does not, like Buddhism, condemn earthly activities as incompatible with divine holiness, since the God we worship is working unceasingly. It does not encourage us to strive vainly to imitate Him ourselves ; but it teaches us to recognise that we may be His fellow-workers. It assures us that this high dignity is not merely reserved for the kings and prophets whom He specially chose to be His servants, but that all men are called in their several vocations and ministries to co-operate with God.

THE DUTY OF DILIGENCE.

THE consideration of the Christian doctrine of God, and His fatherly care of mankind, has enabled us to mark the standpoint from which we approach the discussion of work as a moral duty incumbent on man individually. Many of those who are interested in the ethical aspects

of business affairs deal with a cognate topic on which I do not pretend to enter. We shall concentrate attention on the duty of each individual personally, but shall not attempt to criticise social arrangements or formulate demands for justice as between one individual and another. These questions are constantly coming to the front ; there are many projects for modifying our present system of society so that there shall be a reapportionment of the world's goods. Philanthropists promulgate schemes by which the labourer shall not only get the wages he earns by his work, but shall share in profits as well. Economists busy themselves over theories of consumption and distribution ; and socialists are ready with projects for mulcting the very rich, so as to secure greater equality of opportunity and fairer conditions as between man and man. All this is closely connected with our subject ; personal conduct is affected by the order of society, and this again is likely to be modified by the action of individual citizens. But we can at least choose where we will begin ; and there are good reasons for fixing our attention on personal duty in doing work, rather than on the social arrangements for apportioning its results.

Ours is at all events the preliminary question ; work comes first in order of time, and the distribution of the results of work is subsequent. There are some people who seem to think that diligence in business can be taken for granted ; that the Anglo-Saxon race can be trusted to exert itself, and that energy and enterprise will go on mechanically under all conditions. This seems to me very doubtful ; the sense of duty and the hope of reward are always needed to call out men's best powers. Whatever dreams socialists may cherish or Utopias they may devise, mankind will neither be better nor happier unless pains are taken to see that in any new order the day's work shall be done more effectively and better than it is in the world we know.

Our subject is also more practical ; it is very difficult to arouse classes, as classes, to make any change of habit and practice, and modifications can only be forced upon them by public authority ; but the results which have attended such efforts in the past have not been very encouraging. In the days of James I and Charles I the government took a very decided view of the obligations, both political and social, of the propertied classes. It was possible not only to

insist on the duty of the landed proprietors towards their poor neighbours, but on that of the capitalists as well. The Crown endeavoured to realise an ideal that most of us would regard as impracticable, and ordered, in a season of bad trade, that the rich clothiers should not dismiss their hands lest the poor workmen should fall into distress. In 1622 the Council sent letters to the justices of the peace in the clothing counties: "We required you," they wrote, "to call before you such clothiers as you shall think fitting and to deal effectually with them for the employment of such weavers, spinners and other persons as are now out of work. Where we may not omit to let you know that as we have employed our level endeavour in favour of the clothiers both for the vent of their cloth and for moderation in the price of wool, of which we hope they shall speedily find the effects, so may we not endure that the clothiers in that or other country should at their pleasure and without giving notice to the Board dismiss their workmen¹." The

¹ E. M. Leonard, *Early History of the English Poor Law*, p. 147. This was the traditional view of the duty of the State at the time; similar action had been taken under similar circumstances by Wolsey.

merchants and employers of the day resented governmental interference, as they desired to be free to conduct their business according to market requirements. No subsequent English governments have made serious attempts to enforce what is ideally right in social affairs ; it has taxed their energies to deal with particular cases of wrong. So far as the positive doing of duty is concerned, it is most practical to treat it as a matter for the individual conscience. The duty of the rich in regard to the distribution of their wealth is less likely to be carried out under compulsion, than from the personal effort of individuals to understand and to do what is right for each in his own circumstances. On the whole too, and with respect to the welfare of mankind, it seems more important to call attention to the duties of the many than of the few. The number of those who are able, by their own personal action, to make a noticeable difference in the apportionment of goods and the condition of their neighbours, is very small. The ordinary daily tasks of life are in a different plane. They lie ready to the hands of us all ; they bring every man into touch with his fellows and make him their servant. The contributing something to

the stock of the world's goods, or the rendering some service to our fellow-creatures, is a duty that lies within the reach of everyone.

There is a certain unreality about schemes for reconstituting society and reconstructing the relations of various classes; but this complaint cannot be made against those who content themselves with steady attention to the thing that comes to their hands to do. Work, as a personal duty, taxes our own thought and energy, and involves elements of real self-sacrifice. The public hear at times of the colossal gifts of some millionaire; and amidst the chorus of admiration that greets them, there are sure to be carping voices to complain that the donor will never feel it. We are all ready to appreciate the beauty of generosity that involves some personal sacrifice or self-denial, and we all feel the unreality of grudging and unwilling gifts. Willing sacrifice is that which gives its ethical value to all liberality; and this element may always be present in active work. The man, who is working, is, as a matter of fact—though often unconsciously—giving his time and energy, part of his very self, in the service of others.

There are three aspects in which we may

consider the personal duty of working ; it is a duty to our neighbour, it is a duty to God, and it is a duty to ourselves. It will be convenient to consider each of these in turn, and in the order in which I have stated them.

I. In considering the first point we are at once brought face to face with the old question, And who is my neighbour¹? Under the complicated conditions of modern society it is very difficult for many of us to be acquainted with the people who are affected, or served, by our work ; often they do not come within the range of our knowledge, either in time or place. Of course there are some tasks, such as the catering for daily wants, that bring us into connection with the people of our own district to-day, and that have no farther ramifications. But there is other work, like that of builders, which, though restricted to some particular spot, may affect the well-being of future generations in that place. In regard to many callings, it may be said that the complexity of intercourse and trade is so great, that we cannot tell in what distant places, or times, the results of work done here will be ultimately brought into use. The stock of the world's goods—of human

¹ S. Luke x. 29.

services embodied in material things—reaches very far in space and time; and the course of every little contribution that is added cannot be traced to its destination. Still, though we are all unconscious who and where he may be, the ultimate user of the thing we have moulded and made is the neighbour whom we serve and to whom we owe a duty. The point becomes more clear, perhaps, if we consider who is injured by bad work; the man, who tries to use the thing we have made and finds it will not serve his purpose, is the person that suffers. He is wronged, it may be in purse or in temper, or it may be in health, because someone or other failed in his duty to an unknown neighbour and scamped his work.

For the most part we are so short-sighted that we fail to take account of the distant bearings of our daily doings; and of the fact that there are unknown persons to whom we owe it as a duty to do our best. We are apt to look at the whole affair as a bargain with someone we know, who pays us. If the employer is satisfied, we do not feel called on to look much farther; indeed, many of us find it difficult to look so far. We are apt to concentrate our attention on the recompense we

receive ; and if this is very small, and quite out of keeping with our estimate of our own merits, we have great difficulty in bringing a sense of obligation to bear on the manner in which we do our work. We have had to make a contract to do so much ; a hard bargain as we feel it to be. There is apt to be a misplaced sense of justice in trying to right ourselves and to correct the bargain to our own advantage by inefficiency and carelessness. I have heard of a great scholar who said with intense indignation, "The press have had the meanness to "offer me £100 for my new work, but I'll see "that they get a precious bad book for their "money." Such dishonesty, though apparently not unknown in academic circles, is certainly not confined to them. The *Homily* treats it as a temptation against which it was well to warn the poor. "And here ought artificers and "labouring men, who be at wages for their "work and labour, to consider their conscience "to God, and their duty to their neighbour, lest "they abuse their time in idleness, so defrauding "them which be at charge both with great wages, "and dear commons. They be worse than idle "men indeed, for that they seek to have wages "for their loitering. It is less danger to God

“to be idle for no gain, than by idleness to win
“out of their neighbours’ purses wages for that
“which is not deserved. It is true, that Almighty
“God is angry with such as do defraud the hired
“man of his wages; the cry of that injury
“ascendeth up to God’s ear for vengeance. And
“as true it is, that the hired man, who useth
“deceit in his labour, is a thief before God¹.”
When we make a bargain, we ought to interpret
it honestly; and we can never have a right to
attempt to correct a bad bargain by doing a
second wrong, and a wrong that ultimately falls
we know not where. We are not doing our
duty to our unknown neighbour if we leave
him out of account altogether in our manner
of fulfilling our tasks, and so fail to do our
work as well as we can. The more we are
mindful of the social bearing of our activities,
the more we shall be conscious of moral duty
in the effort to discharge them aright. As
Whichcote urges, “every profession does imply
“a trust for the service of the public, the artist’s
“skill ought to be the buyers’ security².” Jeffery
puts it more generally, and insists that “every

¹ *Homily against Idleness* (1562).

² Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, 371.

"man who doth the duty of his honest calling
"is a benefactor to mankind¹."

2. Diligence in work is not only a duty to our neighbour, but to God as well. This point is elaborated by a former Master of Trinity in the three admirable *Discourses on Industry*, which form the classical treatise on the subject. The manuscripts are in the Library of Trinity College, but they throw no light on the question as to the date and place of delivery of these wonderful sermons. They were edited by Tillotson, who was himself an excellent listener; it had been his habit at Cambridge to hear four sermons on Sundays and one on Wednesdays, but he feared that the public might think Barrow unduly exacting, and published these three sermons as five. On one topic Barrow laid great stress; he insisted that the duty of work was incumbent on men of independent means, and that gentlemen were "more especially "obliged" to it. He repudiated the opinion that a "person of eminent rank in the world, "well allied, grand with honour and furnished "with wealth" was "loose from business" or "free to enjoy himself and the benefits which

¹ J. Jeffery, *The duty and encouragement of religious artificers* (1693), 15.

“nature and fortune have freely bestowed upon him.” The gentleman’s special privileges constituted so many special obligations. “He, out of a grateful regard to divine bounty for the eminency of his station adorned with dignity and repute, for the plentiful accommodation and comforts of life, for his exemption from those pinching wants, those mean cares, those sordid entertainments, and those toilsome drudgeries to which other men are subject, is bound to be more diligent in God’s service, employing all the advantages of his state to the glory of his munificent Benefactor, to whose good providence alone he doth owe them¹.” “A gentleman hath more talents committed to him than an artisan, and consequently more employment required of him: if a rustic labourer or mechanic hath one talent, a gentleman hath ten; he hath innate vigour of spirit and height of courage fortified by use; he hath accomplishment and refinement of parts by liberal education; he hath the succours of parentage, alliance and friendship; he hath wealth, he hath honour, he hath power and authority, he hath command

¹ Barrow, *Of Industry, in five discourses* (1693), in *Works* (1859), III. 420 f.

“of time and leisure ; he hath so many precious
“talents entrusted to him, not to be wrapped
“in a napkin or hidden under ground ; not to
“be squandered away in private satisfactions,
“but for negociation to be put to use in the
“most advantageous way in God’s service....
“He particularly is God’s steward, entrusted
“with God’s substance for the sustenance and
“supply of God’s family, to relieve his fellow
“servants in their need, upon seasonable
“occasions by hospitality, usury and charitable
“beneficence....Surely that gentleman is very
“blind, and very barren of invention who is to
“seek for work fit for him or cannot easily
“discern many employments belonging to him
“of great concern and consequence.”

This principle applies not merely to our possessions but to our powers. The God who has called us all to be fellow-workers with Him has entrusted us with different capacities and opportunities which mark out the special kind of work He has appointed for us,—the vocation to which He has called us. We are less obviously unfitted for some duties in the world than for others ; and the very fact that this is so, points out what God would have us to do. It is the call of His Providence to some

particular task. He will not lightly suffer His gifts to be scorned as worthless and left idle. He is, as the parable tells us, like a hard man, who gathers where he has not strawed ; and at His coming He will require His own—His own gifts lent to us that we might enjoy them—with usury.

The duty of work then is universal ; it is not merely prudential, arising from our personal needs, it is incumbent on every human being. Our circumstances only help to determine the direction in which we should apply our energies. No man on God's earth has a right to be idle ; if he has, as we say, no need to busy himself to earn his living, he can afford to undertake unrequited work ; the very opportunity is in itself a call to such service and marks out his vocation. We do not need to look far afield to find men who recognise this duty. In any English community there are those to be found who, having earned the means of laying aside the cares of business, use their leisure in constant and considerate activity for the good of their neighbours. There are men whose range of sympathy is wide, and whose time is occupied not only with work in connection with charitable institutions, but with numberless cases

of distress which come under their notice and claim their thought and advice and aid. Leisure in such hands gives scope for selecting the kind of activity that shall be pursued, but it does not serve as an excuse for self-pleasing idleness.

The obligation of all to work comes out clearly when we consider it as a duty to God ; but it is by looking at the matter from the point of view of our fellow-men that we can most easily recognise the heinousness of neglecting it altogether. There are so many who pine hopelessly for the opportunities which some of us are ready to waste ; many men and women, in every rank of society, feel that they have the capacity for undertaking some important task and that they have never had the chance. Their time is passed in mechanical routine ; and for lack of a little leisure, they find themselves debarred from doing the best that is in them. Of all the inequalities in the world there is none more galling than the lack of leisure and opportunity to do one's best ; and men are to be deeply blamed who recklessly squander the chances from which their fellow-men have been debarred.

3. The duty of working does not concern others only ; it is to be pursued for our own sakes ; not merely on account of what we get by

working, but because of what we become. Work has a very real part in moulding and shaping our lives and characters; it is a personal discipline to which we ought to submit ourselves. It is likely to repress certain tendencies and to bring out other traits. Habits of work involve and foster diligence as opposed to laziness; they call forth steady and persistent effort as contrasted with caprice, and they tend to the cultivation of the particular capacities and aptitudes of hand and eye which are specially requisite in different callings.

It is in this aspect that the subject has been viewed by most of the Christian writers who treated it in mediaeval times. Work formed a large part of the daily routine of those who had submitted themselves to the discipline of monastic life. According to the Benedictine rule the monks were to engage in manual labour throughout the summer from prime till nearly ten o'clock, and then to study for two hours; at half-past two they were to resume their work, till evening. The winter hours were differently arranged and gave more scope for study¹. The activities of the great world lay outside the view of many of these theologians, and they

¹ S. Benedict, *Regula*, cap. xlviii. in Migne, LXVI. 703.

had little to say about the religious character of secular occupations. In a wild world, where private war raged so frequently, the duty of the Christian preacher was chiefly to protest against what was openly unchristian and to strive to restrain it within limits¹. It was hardly possible, till the time of the Crusades and the foundation of the military orders, to recognise that manly powers could be consecrated to the service of God. Nor was it easy to see that a man might be doing God service in pursuing the ordinary avocations of civil life. The gains of merchants in the process of exchange appeared to be tainted in their very nature, and much ingenuity was expended in defining the range within which honest dealing was possible². The market-place was as doubtfully Christian as the battlefield; it was only in the seclusion of the cloister that the hallowing of human avocations seemed possible; and the discussion of the duty of diligence among the theologians of Latin Christianity is affected by

¹ Semichon, *La paix et la trêve de Dieu*, I. 36.

² For an account of the mediaeval distinctions in regard to just price see Ashley, *Introduction to English Economic Theory and Practice*, I. i. 133. The existence of a just price is assumed in Jeremy Taylor's admirable delineation of common forms of dishonesty. *Holy Living*, III. sec. 3.

these conditions. For the most part they assume the atmosphere of utter self-abnegation and unquestioning obedience, and lay stress on the subjective influence of work on the religious man, rather than on its importance for the world at large. The competing claims of devotion and of labour¹ or of manual labour and of study² were the occasion of controversy at times. But these questions were considered as they arose within the little sphere ruled over by some abbot, and not as they affected the conduct of men and women who were not specially devoted to a religious life.

In the world at large, where there is no such entire self-surrender or cultivation of the habit of obedience, there is all the more likelihood of resentment at anything that hampers our freedom to go our own way. All forms of discipline—of repressing and of training—are in themselves distasteful. They imply the existence of some power that controls us; boys look forward eagerly to the time when they will be their own masters; and there is a ten-

¹ S. Augustin, *De opere monachorum*, cap. xvii. in Migne, XL. 564.

² Mabillon, *Tractatus de studiis monasticis*, part I. c. 14, p. 39.

dency among all classes to regard subjection to discipline as degrading. Our occupations and tasks are usually imposed on us by our circumstances, and even in cases when they are self-imposed, they involve some sacrifice and restraint. We cannot therefore wonder that, however readily men may admit that work is essential for the well-being of mankind, they should be so eager to escape from it personally, since it is an arduous discipline that presses on most of us all through our lives.

There are various excuses which can be commonly alleged for endeavouring to shirk the obligation to work; we may allow ourselves to think that labour, in some or even in all its forms, is beneath us. Some superior people are inclined to distinguish and concentrate their contempt on the operations of rural labour. In America, city life, with its opportunities of amusement and interest and the alacrity it develops, is contrasted with the routine and comparative isolation of the folk who are stigmatised as 'farmers.' We may not infrequently come across echoes of the contempt that was meted out in former ages, both by classical¹ and sacred writers, on manual labour, with the wear and

¹ Cicero, *De Officiis*, I. 42. Arist. *Pol.* I. 6.

tear it involves, and the limited range of experience with which it is often associated. "How can he get wisdom," it was asked of old, "that holdeth the plough, that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks?" So too the carpenter and the workmaster, the engraver and the potter have arduous toil; "the smith fighteth with the heat of the furnace, and the vapour of the fire wasteth his flesh." But none of them seem to the writer to have any claim to respect. "They shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit high in the congregation¹." This selfish contempt for the avocations which are necessary for the maintenance of human society may cloak itself in a religious garb, and speak of the work which has been imposed on mankind for a discipline, as if it were a mere punishment and a curse; but that is a misconception.

Get leave to work

In this world—'tis the best you get at all;
For God, in cursing, gives us better gifts
Than men in benediction.

The divine sentence has proved to be a scarcely disguised blessing, since it has helped to mould

¹ Ecclus. xxxviii. 25.

the worthiest personal lives. In modern times those races, which have most honoured the power of vigorous working, have established their right to dominance in the world.

There is another, and a more plausible ground for resenting and avoiding the discipline of work, as practised either by the hand or the brain. Work of every kind involves concentration and specialisation, and it is necessarily inconsistent with that all-round development of each and every human faculty which many men set before them as their ideal. It is attractive to engage in conscious efforts for individual self-culture,—for training every muscle of the body alike, and obtaining the best conditions of physical health,—for fostering the power of appreciating all that is best in human achievement, in every field of science and literature and art,—for giving free scope for personal development on every side. Humanists, who cherish this ideal for their own lives, naturally use it as a standard by which to judge, and perhaps to censure, the activities of other people. Men, who are seriously engaged in the business of life, are unable to devote themselves consciously to personal self-development all the time, and are not unlikely to find themselves stigmatised

as philistines. Consciously cultured persons are apt to condemn concentration of effort, and to sneer at those who move in a narrow groove. It is easy to explain away the virtue of diligence by ascribing it to the meanest motives, and to treat all energetic attention to everyday duty as sordid money-grubbing. There is much in ordinary life to give excuse for such cynicism, and we need not discuss to what extent any particular expression of it is exaggerated and unfair. For the issue that is implied and involved in this criticism is quite fundamental. It raises the whole question as to the ideal of human life, and the standard by which it is to be tried. If men are justified in taking personal, individual self-development as the main object to be kept in view, then the concentration of effort and specialisation of faculty, which work requires, are things to be shunned.

However attractive this ideal may be, there is reason to believe that Humanism, when untinctured by civic or other 'preterpersonal' enthusiasms, tends to be purely egoistic, and that it is fraught with great evils to society¹. For our immediate purpose it may suffice to point out that, at any rate, it is not Christian;

¹ See Appendix, p. 121, "Egoism in Political Life."

it is incompatible with the aims which have been held up for our acceptance. No man, as we believe, liveth to himself alone ; human society is not a mere collection of atoms, each one of which is free to shape its own course for its own greatest good ; we are every one members one of another. We cannot shake ourselves free from all dependence on the help and care of others ; we dare not try to live our own lives in isolation and pursue our own tastes exclusively. Such a self-centred life would not be worth having, if we could attain it ; he that lives for his own self-development and loveth his life shall lose it. It is in accepting the ties that bind us to other men and submitting to these limitations, that we can realise our true selves. It is well that each should learn to look upon himself as a bit of God's world, as bound to his fellow-men, and as called upon to take up his share in the burden and drudgery of the life of mankind. Every human being may find his life by trying to play the part assigned him, even at the sacrifice of the capacities and tastes on which he prides himself most highly.

He that, in Scriptural phrase, loses his life and willingly sacrifices his own tastes and aspirations, shall find a better existence. Thereby he

establishes the fittest relations with all that is : he finds and he takes his true place in the universe. He may reap the fullest satisfaction in doing his best at the task marked out for him. He thus pursues not his own ideal perhaps, but a divine vocation, so as to be at peace with God.

He may also come, by following this course, to realise his true place in the world ; any of us may open up the widest and deepest interests by merely following out the enquiries suggested by our work. If we would understand it thoroughly, whatever it is, it will soon carry our thoughts far away from our own petty selves. The man who really knows the material on which he is at work, and its previous history, who comprehends all about the tools he uses and the physical forces he has to apply, who foresees the probable destination of the thing he is making, who understands the economic conditions which are involved in it, becomes conscious of the part he is really playing in the work of the world and of the far-reaching movements in which his efforts form a link.

At the same time, by submitting himself to this discipline, a man may establish the happiest and most varied relations with his

fellow-men. It is his power of work that enables him to achieve such independence as is possible; while it is through ordered activities that he is best able to serve his neighbour. Partly by the work itself, partly by the use he makes of the recompense he earns, he has it in his power to help others, and thus to fill a worthy place in the community. Through losing his life and accepting the discipline of work, he can find all that is best worth having—the true vocation set him by God, the full understanding of his place in the world, and the most manifold relations with other men.

Sometimes when a child is sent to school, we hear his relations complain that he is petulant and wayward and has been somewhat spoiled at home, and they express a hope that the discipline will make a man of him. It is our duty, for our own sakes if for nothing else, to school ourselves by accepting the work that comes to hand and doing it with our might in the hope that we may thereby realise our true destiny as men.

So far we have been considering the duty of diligence as a matter of morality, and it is of course true that it is recognised by men of all

religions. Still it appears that Christianity has distinctive teaching of its own, both as to the universality of the obligation to work and the importance of submitting to it as a means of self-discipline. We may surely say that these principles give a special force to common motives and fresh power to fulfil the old injunctions.

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH WORK IS DONE.

“RELIGION is morality touched with emotion¹,” and it is easy to pass on to the religious aspects of work from the moral considerations with which we have been dealing. In treating of man’s relations with his fellow-creatures, we have not been able to dispense with religious ideas altogether, since they are involved in the very conception of Christian ethics, and diligence has been considered as in part a duty we owe to God. At the same time the topic on which we are entering is quite distinct. We have been discussing man’s duty in regard to the use he makes of the things God has created

¹ M. Arnold, *Literature and Dogma*, 21.

and of God-given powers. We must now turn our thoughts to man's attitude towards God Himself. Man as a worker is brought into direct and conscious relation with God personally, by accepting His Will, and submitting to His Judgment. It is incumbent upon us, as Christian men, to see that the aim we have in view, in our work as in all else, is in accordance with the Will of God. This must affect the spirit of our work and the manner in which it is done ; for diligence, though a real duty, is not the only duty to be taken into account. There is such a thing as misdirected energy ; there may, besides, be many defects and serious defects, which are incidental to right conduct. Admirable as the Scot may be, with his capacity for plodding¹, he is, as I am assured, occasionally offensive. We shall find it worth while to dwell for a little on some current misconceptions in regard to the aim of work.

There are probably many people who have never got so far as to recognise that work must have an aim. It is not a thing to be done for its own sake, but always for some object that we have in view. It is always subordinate to the good of man in some form or other,—the

¹ Crosland, *The Unspeakable Scot*, 160.

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increased well-being of those who work, or of those for whom they work. There are other things which may be fitly undertaken for their own sake; it is not unworthy of a human being to pursue truth for its own sake or beauty or goodness, or any other ideal object. But the very conception of work implies the conscious direction of effort towards some end. To work for the mere sake of work is to give all one's energies to means, without seeing or caring to what they tend. Life is more than meat, and human well-being is more than the work which subserves it. We can all sympathise with the scorn which the psalmist felt for the aimless drudgery of those who heap up riches without knowing who shall gather them. To mistake the means for the end, to be absorbed in adding to wealth to the disregard of any consideration of the way to use it, is patent folly. Yet there seem to be some with whom diligence has become a mere habit, and whose thoughts and interests never range beyond the tale of bricks that they furnish from day to day.

There are other men whose aim in work is merely self-regarding; they care nothing about it, but only for the gain they get individually by their exertions. It is rarely, if ever, that

personal considerations of gain, or of credit, can be entirely and absolutely excluded ; and there is always a danger that they shall be over-accentuated, and that our conduct should be merely self-seeking. We are apt to fall into misconceptions on this point, and to suppose that our conduct is wholly unselfish, because we overlook the fact that there are many things which we can distinguish in thought though we cannot separate them in fact. We can talk about the alimentary system and the nervous system as distinct, but we cannot sever them in the living animal, or isolate them from one another. Duty and interest are similarly interconnected in human conduct ; we can separate them in thought—in deliberating on what we shall do to-morrow or reflecting on our conduct yesterday. But at any actual moment of action it is rare, if not impossible, to find cases of duteous action where no element of interest enters at all. This fact renders it possible for cynics to attempt to explain away the sense of duty altogether, and to say of the hero, who seems to be sacrificing in a public cause all that makes life worth having, that he is merely gratifying the desire of notoriety. But this is not true in fact ; the analysis which would resolve all into self-interest is

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ingenious, but it misses one important element because its tests are crude. The testimony of common sense is clear, and we need not try to go behind it. The sense of duty and the desire of pleasure or gain are different in kind, though we often find them in combination. Our motives are ordinarily mixed ; desires for personal gain or reward are always likely to enter to some extent in undertaking any work ; I am not sure that it would be desirable, if it were possible, that they should be absolutely excluded. What is really important is that other considerations should be present as well, to correct and to enlarge the purely personal aim.

Self-seeking may be found in different forms : and they are not all equally offensive ; the coarse selfishness of a stupid man may lead to conduct that is wholly unlike that of the acute person who cherishes a great ambition. The more general diffusion of education and increase of intelligence, though it is not likely to render anyone less self-regarding, is a real benefit to society. We need not be disappointed if it does not serve to revolutionise character and raise men to a higher plane of morality by making them less self-centred. But we may recognise that mere selfishness, even in its most graceful forms,

is likely to exert an unwholesome influence on what a man does. It is for the most part the underlying element that leads to all neglect of work and scamping of work in ordinary life; the man who is merely thinking of pay, will always be apt to try to make anything pass, and run the risk of being found out. In the less commonplace forms of human activity, self-consciousness and self-seeking may do so much to spoil achievement. There are many men of talent, who never lose the thought of themselves or rise to a work of genius. In public life, too, of every kind the very appearance of being merely guided by private aims, whether for recompense or for reputation, does much to qualify our admiration for energetic and able service. In some degree this holds good in all walks of life; the influence of an example of diligence on other people is so different according to the spirit in which any task is undertaken. We all need to set ourselves to correct, or to merge in something larger, the merely self-seeking aims which are among the motives that induce us to work.

It is much more easy to point out how mischievously selfish feeling affects our work than to devise a remedy. For it is sure to

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be hard to place ourselves, or to keep, upon a higher standpoint. Personal attachments will often enable us to forget ourselves, and to find our true being in living for another, but they cannot affect our bearing towards casual acquaintances. "Let us join hands "and help, for this day we are alive together¹," is a maxim which may encourage us to do our best in the circle of which we feel ourselves to be the centre; but when we look beyond this range, the case is altered. It is not of course impossible, but it is very difficult to devise and figure in our mundane experience any object which is so attractive as to take us out of ourselves. Civic enthusiasm was a great power in the ancient and mediaeval world, but there are not many men in modern times who feel intense devotion to the town where they were born. National patriotism has played a great part in inspiring unselfish heroism, but the spread of cosmopolitan feeling seems to show that this influence is on the wane. The enthusiasm for humanity is probably stronger now than it has ever been in bygone days, but it seems often to be too vague and evanescent to be very effective. It is difficult to be personally

¹ W. K. Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*, I. 226.

interested in those who are very distant from us in space or time. We may recognise the importance of benefiting posterity, but there will always be someone to raise the question what has posterity done for me? Even within a narrow range humanitarian sentiment is not very potent. There are many people who find a certain philanthropic interest in discovering how the poor live, and trying to enter into their ideas and to appreciate their surroundings; but the knowledge of the limitations within which benevolence can be really beneficent, and the fear of doing more harm than good, are apt to paralyse charitable effort. There are few minds to whom the service of humanity, as we know it, degraded and undeserving, appeals in such fashion as to call forth their best effort over and over again. We may feel pity, but this emotion is quite compatible with the hopeless sense that it is useless to attempt to intervene. It does not stir to action. There are not many who have eyes to see the heroism of poverty-stricken lives in such a light that they cherish an admiration for suffering mankind, and are taken out of themselves. The picture of our fellow-men which our experience paints does not rouse our enthusiasm.

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It is here that the power of religion may be felt; we do not need to wander around vainly trying to devise some object that shall attract us and help us to rise above mere self-seeking; such an object has been made known to us in the revelation of God. In His perfect being there is a goodness which we may well desire to enter into; there can be an enthusiasm for striving to give the will of the all good God free course upon earth. The double aspect of the Love of God, as manifested in Christ, is insisted on by More, who speaks of charity as “an intellectual love by which we are enamoured
“of the Divine Perfections, such as his Goodness,
“Equity, Benignity, his Wisdom also, his Justice
“and his Power, as they are graciously actuated
“and modified by the forenamed Attributes.
“And I say, that to be truly transformed into
“these Divine Perfections, so far forth as they
“are Communicable to Human Nature, and out
“of the real Sense of them in our selves, to love
“and admire God in whom they infinitely and
“unmeasurably reside, is the truest and highest
“kind of Adoration, and the most grateful
“Praising and Glorifying God that the Soul
“of Man can exhibit to her Maker. But in
“being thus transformed into this Divine Image

“of Intellectual Love, our Minds are not only
“raised in holy Devotions towards God, but
“descend also in very full and free Streams of
“dearest Affection to our Fellow-Creatures,
“rejoicing in their Good as if it were our own,
“and compassionating their Misery, as if it were
“our selves did suffer; and according to our
“best Judgment and Power ever endeavouring
“to promote the one, and to remove the other¹.”

Sterry, who has much to say about the attractive power of the love of God, indulges in a figure which also illustrates its motive power. “All the works of God,” he writes, “are the Divine Love, in so many Modes and “Dresses. There is diversity of Manifestations, “there are diversities of Operations, which “compose the whole frame and business of this “Creation, which are as diverse persons acting “diverse parts upon this stage. But there is “one Spirit, one Lord, one God, one Love, “which worketh all in all.

“It is the Divine Love, with its unsearchable “Riches, which is the fulness that filleth all “persons, and all parts upon the stage of Time “or Eternity. If any man know not the way

¹ *An explanation of the grand Mystery of Goodnes, in Theological Works, 37.*

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“to the Sea, let him follow a River in the course
“of its stream, saith the Comedian.

“Dear Reader, if thou wouldst be led to
“that Sea, which is as the gathering together,
“and confluence of all the waters of Life, of all
“Truths, Goodness, Joys, Beauties, and Blessed-
“ness; follow the stream of the Divine Love,
“as it holdeth on its course, from its head in
“eternity through every work of God, through
“every Creature. So shalt thou be not only
“happy in thine end, but in thy way; while
“this stream of Love shall not only be thy
“guide by thy side, but shall carry thee along in
“its soft and delicious bosom, bearing thee up
“in the bright Arms of its own Divine Power,
“sporting with thee all along, washing thee
“white as snow in its own pure floods, and
“bathing thy whole Spirit and Person in heavenly
“unexpressible sweetnesses¹.”

We may see that, as a matter of fact, the motive which we call the love of God has been strong enough to kindle human enthusiasm in all ages. It has been a motive power which has overmastered the self-seeking, self-regarding considerations that are so potent in our natures, and has roused an enthusiasm for aiding the

¹ Sterry, *op. cit.*, Preface.

most hopeless and degraded, because they are God's creatures and are to be revered and cared for as such.

In fact, the power and importance of religious belief, so far as conduct is concerned, is just this,—that it touches morality with emotion. All religions insist on self-abnegation and self-sacrifice before God. This is the very essence of Islam; it is the secret of the reckless courage which has been displayed by the soldiers of the Crescent. But all religions are not alike in arousing the same emotions; the faith which inspires to bravery in battle does not necessarily serve to render the routine of daily occupations more congenial¹. It is worth while to consider the power of the earlier and of the later revelations of God in the Bible respectively, to arouse such feeling as can be brought to bear on the duty of work. Other faiths supply sanctions which serve to supplement and re-enforce the maxims of ordinary morality, while Christianity seems to set the whole duty in a new light.

The Old Testament furnishes us with abundant illustrations of the view which was taken by writers in pre-Christian times of the

¹ Tillotson, Sermon LXIV., *The prejudices against Christianity considered*, in *Works*, II. 412.

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duty of work. Ordinary common sense showed that in the world, as the men of Judaea knew it, diligence and prudence prospered, and slothfulness came to penury; but, as they believed, the order of the world was a divine order. "The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool and rewardeth transgressors¹." The physical results of moral causes were affixed to them by divine decree, and thus the fear of God served to strengthen the maxims suggested by worldly prudence. But on the whole, the wise man has more to say in condemnation of idleness than in urging reasons for doing what is right. "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well; I looked upon it and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth and thy want as an armed man²."

When religious motives are only brought in

¹ Proverbs xxvi. 10.

² *Ib.* xxiv. 30.

to re-enforce the duty of diligence, they can have little or no effect in transforming our conception of work, or infusing it with a better spirit. The dour man, who drudges because the world is so ordered that he must, will drudge on all the more because he believes that the delivery of his tale of bricks has been imposed on him by God. The disillusioned man, who plods on, bitterly, because there is nothing else to do, may find in such religion hope for the next world, but none for his life in this. The selfish man, who is giving his mind to get on in the world and to amass wealth as fast as he can, may quote Scripture "like a very learned clerk" and encourage himself in the course he pursues. There is a satisfaction in feeling that he is earning Scriptural commendation all the time. "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat¹." "Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men²." The teaching of the Old Testament appears to do little more than give religious sanction to the effort to do one's best to get on in the world; it re-enforces the maxims of common sense. Very different is

¹ Proverbs xiii. 4.

² *Ib.* xxii. 29.

the whole tone of the New Testament teaching. This gives us at once grounds for deciding what we ought to do, and a standard as to the way in which we should do it; these do not rest on common sense, but involve supernatural elements, since they have their origin in the Love of God and the desire to please Him by doing His Will. "The intention to please God "in all his actions as the best and happiest "thing in the world" is the determining motive of truly Christian conduct in all the employments of life. "Let the gentleman of birth and "fortune but have this intention and you will "see how it will carry him from every appearance of evil to every instance of piety and "goodness. He cannot live by chance, or as "humour and fancy carries him, because he "knows that nothing can please God but a "wise and regular course of life. He cannot "live in idleness and indulgence, in sports and "gaming, in pleasures and intemperance, in vain "expenses and high living; because these things "cannot be turned into means of piety and "holiness, or made so many parts of a wise and "religious life¹."

"Again, let a tradesman have this intention,

¹ Law, *Serious Call to a Devout Life*, ch. ii.

“and it will make him a saint in his shop;
“his everyday business will be a course of wise
“and reasonable actions, made holy to God, by
“being done in obedience to His will and
“pleasure. He will buy and sell, and labour
“and travel, because by so doing he can do
“some good to himself and others. But then,
“as nothing can please God but what is wise,
“and reasonable, and holy, so he will neither
“buy, nor sell, nor labour in any other manner,
“nor to any other end, but such as may be
“shown to be wise, and reasonable, and holy.
“He will therefore consider not what arts, or
“methods, or application, will soonest make him
“richer and greater than his brethren, or remove
“him from a shop to a life of state and pleasure;
“but he will consider what arts, what methods,
“what application, can make worldly business
“most acceptable to God, and make a life of
“trade a life of holiness, devotion, and piety.
“This will be the temper and spirit of every
“tradesman; he cannot stop short of these
“degrees of piety, whenever it is his intention
“to please God in all his actions, as the best
“and happiest thing in the world.”

The change from the Old Testament to the New Testament view of daily duty may be at

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least illustrated by the greatest of all the revolutions which can take place in the history of labour. Wherever slavery has existed or does exist, the ultimate motive which society brings to bear on the labourer is fear¹. He has to work under compulsion ; in some times and places he is subjected to brutal and violent compulsion ; in others his lot may be sweetened by kindly influences, but he is bound to do as he is bid or suffer. With the free labourer the case is altered ; he is encouraged to work by the hope of reward. He earns his wages by his work, and the hope of earning more wages may be a constant stimulus to better and more energetic work. There is no need to compare the economic results of the two systems on society or to show that labour extorted under compulsion is much less efficient than free labour. The important point for our purpose lies in the difference of status ; the conferring freedom on slaves does not necessarily make them more comfortable, or in any physical sense better off, but it raises them to a plane in which they are treated as men who can be induced and encouraged to work, and not as mere brutes who are forced to take their part

¹ J. S. Nicholson, *Principles of Political Economy*, I. 82.

in what is going on, whether they choose or not. The principle is of universal application ; so long as we are merely on the standpoint of common sense in regard to our daily duties, we can hardly fail to feel that we must step out and march with the crowd or be crushed ; the ultimate reason that lies behind all daily routine is compulsion. It is through accepting the Christian revelation that men may be conscious that their position in God's Universe is not that of slaves, but of sons, since they are gladly trying to enter into and realise His aims in their own sphere of life. The Christian beliefs that all is in God's hands, and that all things work together for good, throws a new light on all the trivialities of life. All our petty occupations may be affected by the ultimate hope which we are taught to cherish. "Labour of itself is a harsh unpleasant thing unless it be "seasoned with hope.....'He that plows must "plow in hope,' his plough shall not go deep "else, his furrows will be but shallow. Sever "hope from labour and you must look for labour "and labourers accordingly, slight and shallow, "God knoweth¹."

Just because the Christian hope enters into

¹ Andrews, *Sermons*, II. 206.

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that which is within the veil and is supernatural, it can give encouragement and comfort in all emergencies and all conditions of life. Christianity did not attack slavery directly as an institution, but it took the misery out of the lot of the slave by making him conscious of his status in the family of God. "Those who are faithful in this life as servants shall," as Fleetwood writes, "be looked upon, and treated as children, in the life to come; they shall have the reward of inheritance, which is, what properly belongs to God's children.....He will reward their labours with eternal rest and quiet, and their faith and honesty with rewards that never fail; they shall be happy in the glorious liberty of the sons of God.....Let them support themselves, under the worst of their condition, with this hope and expectation, by discharging their duty carefully and honestly as they should, and then they will live easily; they will have the earnest of heaven in a good conscience beforehand, and live and be more happy than their masters, if they are not also good men¹."

There are doubtless many professing Chris-

¹ Fleetwood, *Complete Collection of Sermons, Tracts and Pieces of all kinds*, 327.

tians who do not appreciate the full bearing of New Testament teaching in this way, and are content to remain on the plane of Old Testament thought. This is especially true of modern times. It is a commonplace to remark how prominent names and ideas, drawn from the Old Testament history, were in the political struggles of the seventeenth century. It need not surprise us to find a similar influence at work in regard to social matters as well. This reversion to Old Testament models resulted in much greater strictness in regard to some matters, such as the observance of Sunday. Nicholas Bounde¹ insisted that "upon the Lord's "daye we ought to rest from al honest recreations and lawfull delightes"; his teaching appeared useful, as it tended to check unseemly conduct at church², but it was soon taken up

¹ *The doctrine of the Sabbath* (1595), 131.

² "Therefore upon this day all sorts of men must give over utterly all shooting, hunting, hawking, tennise, fencing, bowling or such like, and they must have no more dealing with them than the artificer with his trade, or husbandmane with his plowe; and as men must not come to church with their bowes and arrowes in their hands, so neither with their hawks upon their fists, which they hadde need to do so much the lesse, because a living creature which is stirring, which must so be held in the eye of the bearer, and in the open view of others, is more able to hinder the minde from being attentive than a senselesse creature, or a piece of

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and diffused in very exaggerated forms. One of the preachers contended that to ring more bells than one on the Lord's day was as great a sin as to commit murder¹. In spite of the efforts made both by the authorities in Church and State, these opinions spread with great rapidity², and took such a hold as to put a restraint on Christian liberty and throw men back on the mode of thought of the Mosaic dispensation³. In regard to other matters, such as the treatment of native races and the responsibilities of men in the use of their money, the consequences were more serious, and we are still suffering from the lowered tone of morality which then became current. But it is of less importance to account for the general readiness of professing Christians to rest contented with a Semitic code of moral duty, than to indicate the direction in which we must look for a remedy. The enforcement of another law is unnecessary, since the renewing of the mind and transformation

sticke, which a man may cast behind him or throw where he list." *Ib.* 132.

¹ Thomas Rogers, *The Faith, Doctrine and Religion professed and protected in the Realme of England and Dominions of the same* (1607), Preface, §§ 20 to 23.

² Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, bk. ix. § viii. 21.

³ See Appendix, p. 127, "The Consecration of Secular Life."

of the character has become possible. By the cultivation of a devout spirit, we may hope to attain to the full Christian privilege of so entering into the thoughts of God as to be able to discern for ourselves what our duties are, and to do them in the way that pleases Him.

We are so apt to look on prayer—and here also we are, I think, influenced by Old Testament language—as if it were merely petitioning God for particular things we desire; we fail to value it as an opportunity for cultivating less grovelling aims by entering into intercourse with God. “It is the ‘ascent of our mind to God’ (as the ancient Christians describe ‘it’¹), a familiar converse, a holy discourse “with the Lord of all; the withdrawing of our “minds from this world and all things in it, “above which it raises our thoughts, and lifts “them up unto the best and chiefest God; into “Whose company it brings us, and sets us in “His blessed presence, that he may lift up the “light of his countenance upon us².” It is by

¹ *De precatone*, I., printed as one of the doubtful works of S. Chrysostom (ed. Gaume, II. 932).

² Patrick, *A discourse concerning prayer, especially of frequenting daily public prayers*, in *Works*, IV. 666.

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prayer that we may strive to raise our thoughts to the level of the thoughts of God¹, and thus to see our lives from His point of view. In this effort—and earnest prayer is always an effort—many acts are involved as distinct elements. We may seek in adoration to lift up our hearts to the magnificence of God's majesty and power, and thus realise how puny and insignificant our struggles and interests are, and how small a place they occupy in the Universe. In self-oblation we may endeavour to lay aside all self-seeking selfish ambitions. The full meaning of prayer may be recognised not only by the attentive consideration of Christ's example, but from the model He gave us for our prayers. It is certainly true that we cannot hope to enter into communion with God unless we are anxious to lay aside all that is out of accord with His thoughts. "Not my will but thine be done" is the key-note of all Christian prayer. We are encouraged to make our requests known unto God, and to cultivate a perfect trust in His wisdom and love, so that, whatever happens, our personal cares and anxieties may sit lightly upon us.

"To this end let us consider," as Bishop

¹ See Appendix, p. 137, "The Consecration of Intellect."

Patrick says, "that we do not pray that we
"may alter the mind of God ; Who is always
"the same unchangeable goodness, ready to
"give unto those who are qualified to receive
"His favours; but that we may alter and change
"our own mind for the better, and thereby be-
"come disposed for the good things of which
"we are desirous. And nothing alters us so
"much as serious prayer, which puts a new
"mind into us, and for the present makes us
"quite another sort of creatures. We are for-
"getful of God ; lovers of ourselves ; confident
"in our own strength ; doaters upon this pre-
"sent world ; too much wedded to our own
"will and pleasure ; complainers, murmurers,
"envious, wavering and inconstant in our good
"purposes, unmindful of other men's miseries,
"revengeful and implacable, which are all bars
"to the obtaining of God's mercy. And there-
"fore prayer is absolutely necessary to remove
"them ; that is, to remember us of God ; to
"keep Him in remembrance, and to maintain
"an acquaintance with Him ; to fill us with love
"to Him ; to humble and abase us in our own
"thoughts ; to draw our hearts off from this
"vain world, and to settle our trust in Him
"alone ; to fix our dependence on Him, and

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“subdue our wills to His; to give us a taste
“of spiritual pleasures; to make us thankful,
“contented and well satisfied; to move our
“compassion towards others who stand in need
“of our help, as we do of the help of God; to
“incline us to be pitiful and to do good and
“forgive; without which we confess, in our very
“prayers, that we cannot expect forgiveness
“from God. This consideration shows that
“prayer is so necessary, that there can be no
“goodness nor virtue in the world without it;
“but mankind will grow strangers unto God,
“and He unto them; which will bring all things
“to confusion¹.”

Monastic institutions were devised and maintained as affording a sphere where it was most possible to lead a devout life and cultivate a devout spirit; and in the rule, as laid down by S. Benedict, or as reconstituted in the reformed orders, we see how closely the practice of labour and of prayer² were associated as two separate means to one end. And indeed, they are most closely allied; on the one hand, the consecration of thought and will; on the other, of act and deed. It is when we learn in times of

¹ Patrick, *op. cit.*, in *Works*, IV. 652.

² S. Benedict, *Regula*, 8—16, in Migne, LXVI. 409.

prayer to purify our desires and dedicate our intentions to God that we can hope at all to walk with Him, not merely for one occasional step, but habitually. Devout working is the using of our physical and intellectual energies, not to do our own will merely, but to carry out what we believe that God has given us to do as God would approve. And thus it is true that "to labour is to pray"; it is another form of self-consecration. Devout working is the carrying of a prayerful attitude into all the ordinary activities and relations of life. In the complete renunciation of selfish ambition, both prayer and labour are needed—the one to foster a devout spirit, and the other to bring our activities of every kind into obedience to Christ. Such work may not be recompensed by any reward, but none the less it entails a blessing. Nothing can diminish the satisfaction of having done one's best in a good cause—even if the efforts have ended in failure. Nothing can add to the glory of being the instrument through whom part of God's design has been brought into effect.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the service which the monastic life, in its two sides of labour and prayer, has rendered to Europe

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and to the world¹. But spiritual forces take new forms as the centuries pass; the work which the monks of the West did in the dark ages does not need to be done over again, and other agencies are perhaps better fitted to deal with the problems that arise in our time. The signs of decline in the effectiveness of the monastic witness for God to the world were observable as early as the ninth century²; and despite the strenuous attempts of the newer orders to reinvigorate the old system, it had greatly lost its hold before the storms of the Reformation period struck it down in so many lands. In the Philippines and in Lower Canada, where the religious orders have so much property and power, they do not commend Christianity to them that are without. The world now looks upon men and women, who are vowed to monastic life, with wonder, but with suspicion rather than admiration.

The witness of monastic discipline was always restricted, as it could not exemplify the consecration of all sides of secular life; and just because it was thus specialised, it had weaknesses of its own. "One would wonder," as Bishop

¹ Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, I. 282.

² Cunningham, *Essay on Western Civilisation*, II. 40.

Wilson says¹, "how so many people come to
"be persuaded, that a life retired from the world,
"and spent in devotions, should be most accept-
"able to God. Pray what were we sent into
"the world for? Was it not to try how we
"would behave ourselves in it? How we would
"use the talents, or opportunities of doing good,
"which God has afforded us?

"Now if, instead of doing this, we resolve
"to get out of the world as much as we can,
"and do little or no good in our generation,
"under pretence of avoiding temptations (as if
"God could not defend us in every state His
"providence calls us to); or under pretence of
"serving God more devoutly (as if God were
"not to be served in works, as well as in words);
"or lastly, under pretence that God does not
"expect it from us: 'I am not made for *business*;
"I love *retirement*;' if I take care of one, that
"is all I can do.' Such resolutions as these will
"deceive us at the last, and will stand us in no
"stead, when we shall appear before God, to
"be rewarded or punished."

The possibility of leading a saintly and devoted life in secular callings has been demonstrated again and again. One particularly

¹ Wilson, *Works*, III. 497.

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interesting example has been handed down to us from a time when there were special excuses for exaggerating the advantage of retirement, and a corrective was greatly needed. "We read a pretty story of S. Anthony," for I prefer to tell it in Hugh Latimer's words¹, "which, being in "the wilderness, led there a very hard and strait "life, insomuch that none at that time did the "like: to whom came a voice from heaven, "saying 'Anthony, thou art not so perfect as "is a cobbler that dwelleth at Alexandria.' "Anthony, hearing this, rose up forthwith, and "took his staff, and went till he came to Alex- "andria, where he found the cobbler. The "cobbler was astonished to see so reverend a "father come to his house. Then Anthony said "unto him, 'Come and tell me thy whole con- "versation, and how thou spendest thy time.' "'Sir,' said the cobbler, 'as for me, good works "have I none, for my life is but simple and "slender; I am but a poor cobbler. In the "morning, when I rise, I pray for the whole "city wherein I dwell, specially for all such "neighbours, and poor friends as I have: after, "I set me at my labour, where I spend the "whole day in getting my living; and I keep

¹ Hugh Latimer, *Remains*, 94.

“me from all falsehood, for I hate nothing so
“much as I do deceitfulness ; wherefore, when
“I make to any man a promise, I keep it and
“do it truly. And so I spend my time poorly,
“with my wife and children, whom I teach and
“instruct, as far as my wit will serve me, to
“fear and dread God. And this is the sum of
“my simple life.’ In this story, you see how
“God loveth those that follow their vocation
“and live uprightly, without any falsehood in
“their dealing. This Anthony was a great,
“holy man ; yet this cobbler was as much es-
“teemed before God as he.” Bishop Beveridge
expounded the notion of good works more
clearly than the cobbler understood it. “How
“mean and low soever any action may seem to
“others, if all these properties concur in it, you
“may conclude it, notwithstanding, to be a very
“good work ; so that by this means your very
“eating and drinking, your trading and traffick-
“ing in the world, may be a good work ; for you
“may and ought to do good in the meanest
“and commonest, as well as the greatest and
“most sublime actions of your whole life. And
“it is both your duty and interest always to
“do so from one end of the week to the other,
“from one end of the year, yea, from one end

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“of your lives to the other ; so as not to leave
“the least chink or cranny of your time un-
“stopped with good works ; but as you are
“always to ‘depart from doing evil,’ so are you
“always to be ‘doing good!’”

The same principle is insisted on by William Tindale² in his *Treatise on the Parable of the Wicked Mammon* ; and I think the words of his fervid exhortation are well worth quoting. “Now thou that ministerest in the kitchen, and
“art but a kitchen-page, receivest all things of
“the hand of God ; knowest that God hath put
“thee in that office ; submittest thyself to his
“will ; and servest thy master not as a man, but
“as Christ himself with a pure heart, according
“as Paul teacheth us ; putttest thy trust in God,
“and with him seekest thy reward. Moreover,
“there is not a good deed done, but thy heart
“rejoiceth therein ; yea, when thou hearest that
“the word of God is preached by this apostle,
“and seest the people turn to God, thou con-
“sentest unto the deed ; thine heart breaketh out
“in joy, springeth and leapeth in thy breast,
“that God is honoured : and in thine heart doest

¹ Beveridge, *Sermons*, in *Works*, vi. 315.

² William Tindale, *Parable of Wicked Mammon*, in *Doctrinal Treatises*, 101.

“the same that that apostle doth, and haply
“with greater delectation and a more fervent
“spirit. Now ‘he that receiveth a prophet in
“the name of a prophet shall receive the reward
“of a prophet’; that is, he that consenteth to
“the deed of a prophet, and maintaineth it, the
“same hath the same Spirit and earnest of
“everlasting life which the prophet hath, and
“is elect as the prophet is. Now if thou com-
“pare deed to deed there is difference betwixt
“washing of dishes, and preaching of the word
“of God; but as touching to please God, none
“at all: for neither that nor this pleaseth, but
“as far forth as God hath chosen a man, hath
“put his Spirit in him, and purified his heart
“by faith and trust in Christ. Let every man
“therefore wait on the office wherein Christ
“hath put him, and therein serve his brethren.”

The thesis on which these writers insisted is not one that is likely to raise much dispute in the present day; but the difficulty of reducing it to practice does not greatly change. The language, which Jeremy Taylor¹ drew up as a daily help to merchants, artificers and others to dedicate their lives to God, is not out of date; and there is interest in the suggestions

¹ *Holy Living*, ch. iii. § iv.

offered, and illustrated in some detail, by Dr Jeffery, the editor of Whichcote's Aphorisms, in his Whit-Monday Sermon before the Weavers' Guild at Norwich¹. "A man may take many, "and considerable hints from his Labours and "his Dealings to advance the Spiritual temper "and disposition of his mind. For the Materials "upon which any man employeth his Art and "Labour are the Creatures of God. The State "to which those materials are brought by his "Art and Labour is useful to men. The success "of his diligence is profitable ; or the unsuccessfulness of it is hurtful to Himself. And from "every one of these a man may raise such "meditations, as may dispose him to Religious "duty. For from hence, he may learn Thankfulness to God, Love to men, and Care for "himself. If he labours from one end of the "week to the other, for the advantages of a "Mortal Life, and the supply of bodily necessities ; how much rather (will he think) ought "a man to labour for the Happiness of Eternal "Life, and the Salvation of his Immortal Soul.

"Again, those whom a man dealeth with are "either friendly and honest to him, and then "he may justly bless God, that there are such

¹ *The duty and encouragement of religious artificers*, 19.

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“men to deal with: Or they are unfriendly and
“dishonest, and then he may bless God, that
“he is not undone by them.

“Again, either he himself dealeth friendly
“and honestly with Others, and then he may
“bless God, that he is overcome by no Tempta-
“tion to the contrary: Or he dealeth unfriendly
“and dishonestly with others, and then he had
“need Repent lest the Curse of God should
“enter into his house, and consume his Sub-
“stance.

“Thus there can no possible Case be put,
“but that a man may in his Work and Labour,
“in his Dealing and Converse, find occasion for
“his duty; and so, at the same time, work in
“his worldly Calling, and work out his Sal-
“vation too.

“To Conclude: Let no man pretend the
“Hindrance of his duty by the multitude of his
“business; or that his necessary Employment
“in this world, is the reason why he neglecteth
“his interest in the other. For no honest Calling
“is inconsistent with Religious duty; but on
“the contrary, God who giveth Wisdom to the
“Artist for his business, doth also give Oppor-
“tunities for his duty in that business. God
“hath been good to us, in this very point; Let

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“us be good to our selves; and remember, that
“the Apostle joyneth these two, Not slouthful
“in business; Fervent in Spirit, serving the
“Lord.”

THE APPRECIATION OF WORK.

THERE can be no doubt that every man is in some respects in the best position to judge of his own work; this is certainly true of literary work. The author knows exactly what his object was and what he meant to do; he knows too the conditions under which his labour was carried out and the means at his disposal. The disappointment, which many a man feels in his own work, arises from the sense that he has not made the most of his opportunities; or he may cherish an honest pride in knowing that he has done better with them than any man who has been engaged on similar undertakings. But there are two very important points on which a man's judgment is not to be trusted; he may be very easily mistaken on the question as to whether his work was worth doing at all; there are laborious pedantries, which seem to be

utterly useless. Again, from his own disposition or training, he may have a low standard of the manner in which work ought to be done; he may be incapable of knowing good work from bad, and therefore unable to judge of the quality of his own attempts. In order to appreciate work properly there must be some outside judgment to which one can appeal, both as to the manner in which any task is done and the deeper question as to whether it was worth while to engage in it at all. For many purposes we find such a decision in the judgment of future ages; there are books that live, and that men go on reading after the first freshness is lost, and when the allusions that occur have become obscure and the language itself difficult. There are also books that are soon superseded and forgotten, and that posterity unearths as curiosities or quotes as absurdities. But we have no means of forecasting the judgment of posterity so as to use it as a basis for criticising and improving what we are doing now. Men may look to coming generations for future fame but not for help in the present.

From this point we may see a second way in which the Christian religion affects the character of a man's work; it teaches him

that he should consciously submit his work, like all the rest of his life and conduct, to the judgment of God. And this on many grounds ; partly because he is conscious that he is not an independent workman, but that he is after all a mere labourer who has been called to share in God's work ; partly too because the object in view is not of his own devising ; it is his intention to carry out God's plan. He cannot be satisfied with doing his work in the manner that he thinks will serve, because he desires to make it worthy of God's approval. It is of course true that man can enter only imperfectly into the thoughts of God ; but even though the clear manifestation of the divine judgment on human work is reserved for the Day of Doom, there are sufficient indications of the grounds of divine appreciation to give us a standard to apply, so as to test the ultimate worth and character of all the labour that is done under the sun.

Since the standard is not fully understood and is not perfectly precise in our minds, it is commonly spoken of as an ideal. The Christian ideal, as depicted in the Gospels, is so high that many persons are inclined to doubt the wisdom of trying to bear it in mind at all. What is the use of a revelation that inculcates an im-

possible standard of virtue? Why should we trouble about it at all? Is it not a more sensible course to aim at something that is more or less within our reach, and to be satisfied with trying to attain to that?

To me this seems a shallow suggestion; I hold it to be important that we should cherish high ideals—indeed the higher the better—and this with a view not only to personal excellence, but to social progress as well. It is so easy to acquiesce in existing evils, especially if they press more heavily on other people than they do on ourselves, that it is necessary to foster the habit of at least aiming at improvement and keeping it before our minds. In the seventeenth century, when Absolutism was proving triumphant both in Spain and in France, it was possible to contend that the standard of religious truth was set for the subjects by the Prince—*cujus regio ejus religio*—and even that conceptions of right and duty were derived from the constituted order of society. This was the position which was taken by Hobbes, and it called forth the antagonism of Cudworth and the other Cambridge moralists of the day. Whatever other defects such teaching may have had, it seems at least to lie open to this charge,

—that it gives no satisfactory basis for the criticism of society itself, or for the suggestion of lines along which we ought to endeavour to move for the accomplishment of reforms.

There was a somewhat similar defect in the morality that was current in the ancient world. Practical maxims of right were derived from the justice which was authoritatively enforced ; and the personal character of the citizen was formed by the life of the city itself. Ideals which transcended actual experience of political life could be dismissed as idle dreams, and men of the highest character habitually acquiesced in conditions which we stigmatise as degrading or vicious. Such an institution as slavery was sanctioned by long tradition and general practice ; it seemed to be grounded in Nature. We realise that it is inconsistent with our ideal of human life ; and despite the difficulty of dispensing with it in tropical lands, we have steadily endeavoured to move in the direction of its abolition. In Europe it has gradually disappeared ; changes in military and economic conditions have been the occasions for the steps which have been taken towards realising the Christian ideal¹, but these incidents only account

¹ Cunningham, *Essay on Western Civilisation*, II. 132.

for change and readjustment, not for the introduction of a better status for labour. The ideal aim has been constant; the special occasions have been apparently accidental; but all the contributory causes must be taken into account if the course of progress is to be rendered intelligible. It is only when we have a high ideal for human life, personally and socially, and set ourselves to realise it all the time, that there can either be effective criticism of the existing order or serious attempts to introduce improvement.

The cherishing of a high ideal has a bearing on personal character as well as a social reform, for it is the only means of cultivating one specially Christian virtue, that of humility. It was hardly recognised as a virtue in the ancient world; and even now it does not command universal admiration, partly because its real nature is so much misunderstood. It has a counterfeit which is assumed by those who shirk their responsibilities, and cloak their indolence by professions of unfitness for doing any duties they find disagreeable. But humility, when rightly understood, does not seem to be naturally connected with one kind of temperament rather than another; it certainly is not

inconsistent with mental and bodily vigour; lymphatic people who give in to their indolence are not necessarily destitute of self-conceit. The nature of the genuine virtue is perhaps most clearly illustrated in the story and character of S. Paul, and by the revulsion which took place in his moral life. In his earlier days, as a Jew, he had, as he believed, known all about the divine requirements. He made his boast of the Law and was perfectly clear in his own mind; he thought with himself that he ought to do many things against the new sect that had sprung up at Jerusalem. He was confident that it was a good thing to abet those who stoned Stephen, and to get authority to carry on a persecution in Damascus. The divine intervention, which checked his career, not only afflicted him with physical blindness, but forced him, perhaps for the first time in his life, to doubt the sufficiency of his own judgment, and threw him into a state of uncertainty as to his duty. Trembling and astonished he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He had become a humble man, who was ready to admit that he might be mistaken and to submit his judgment to that of God. And with all his vigour and efficiency he still retained this mental

attitude. In later days he can write that he takes no account of the criticisms that are passed by other people, and has very little confidence in his own opinion. He does not care to justify himself, but is content to leave his case to an unerring tribunal; "He that judgeth me is the Lord." True humility of spirit is not found among those who limit their efforts by their inclinations; it is the quality of men who are not careful to take credit for the things they accomplish. They distrust their own opinions and find little pleasure in having come up to their own rule of right, but are consciously trying all the time to submit themselves to God's standard, both for what they are and for what they do.

It would take us too far afield to attempt to discriminate the Christian conception of a Divine Judgment to come from that which is found in other religions. I will merely point out that in the Old Testament the Messiah is represented as taking vengeance on enemies rather than as judging with perfect righteousness. It may suffice to call attention to the fact that the Divine Judgment is always treated in the New Testament as definitely personal, and as taking account of the individual circumstances

and opportunities of the man. The personal, individual thought and care of the Father, which Christ revealed, is a fundamental conception which affects every aspect of Christian morality. God's care not only controls the conditions of temptation, but holds out an appropriate reward or a graduated penalty to each. It is as a matter of filial obligation, that a Christian is called to diligence in his vocation; it is through personal feeling, that he may be inspired to persevering service; and it is to a judgment on his own character, by one who knows what the struggle is, that he is called to submit. In all the indications which are given us of the final assize, as portrayed in Scripture, this feature is clear,—that the Divine sentence is based on evidence, which is furnished partly by a man's words and partly by the deeds done in the body. A man's work, and more obviously a child's, though it may be of little importance on its own account, is yet evidence as to what he has tried to do and how hard he has tried to do it. Apart altogether from the use it subserves, every piece of work is testimony as to the manner in which some man has discharged his allotted task. It shows that he has not rested satisfied with mere

aspirations and intentions, and wasted his life in dreaming; he has made some sort of an effort. That is much; and the continued effort that is not wearied in well-doing, but struggles on and perseveres, until it overcomes, is the very type of the highest Christian triumph.

While personal effort is treated in the New Testament as so important, there is another aspect in which work may be considered,—not relatively to the worker, but separately and by itself. It may be gauged by some absolute measurement; not merely taken as testimony to the character of a particular individual, but estimated as a contribution to the good of mankind. There is need to know, not only how a man has done his work, but whether his work was worth doing at all. If we really take the service of man as our standard, we shall be inclined to question the importance of some great enterprises, and feel the possibilities that lie in the little things of life. On this, Christian teaching is most precise; it lays stress on the worth of the most trivial acts of kindness and on the sin of neglecting them. Our Lord's words about the cup of cold water give us a starting point; no such deed is unrewarded, and all have an unchanging value. As Bishop Hall

insists, an exceptional character attaches to moral worth. "In all earthly commodities the market rises and falls according to conceit and occasion; neither is there any intrinsical and settled worth in any of them; only spiritual things, as virtue and grace, are good in themselves, and so carry their...value in them that they make their owner absolutely rich and happy¹." Yet though the moral worth of actions may not vary, it can certainly be graded; there are degrees of excellence, even where all are good.

On this point we get little suggestion from Scripture, and as a question of ordinary morality it is not easy to find a common term by which to compare the vast variety of possible virtuous acts so as to place them in order of merit. We may, however, get some help by analogy, if we turn for a time to consider the physical results of human action. There are so many different kinds of work in the world, that might be appraised by so many different qualities. Some of them involve much technical skill, if we are to judge them at all. It is not easy to fix on any criterion, which can be applied so generally as to afford a basis for comparison

¹ *Select Works of Bishop Hall*, edited by Pratt, III. 257.

and for the approval or disapproval of different pieces of work of different kinds. We might be inclined to classify them according to the preciousness of the material on which they are exercised, or according to the range of human requirement which they helped to meet; but neither of these tests is of very general applicability. There is, however, one test which we commonly use, and it serves for many purposes. We habitually call things good or bad according as they are likely to last or not. Good work, in almost every department of industry, is lasting, since it does not need to be done over again or to be put to rights after a brief interval. There is of course a great difference in various kinds of goods, according to the material they are made of and the wear and tear to which they are subject; but we are justified in being dissatisfied with anything that fails to last so long as it may be reasonably expected to be of service. The old phrase, by which bad work was stigmatised, is susceptible of this interpretation; 'deceitful wares' were goods that looked as if they would last when they would not.

It might even be argued, I think, that the status of different occupations in the world is

closely related to the lasting character of their results. It is not possible to weigh various human needs against one another, and to say that the work which is directed to the supplying of food has a greater importance than that which furnishes clothes or shelter. All are requisite to well-ordered human life; but products of industry, that continue to be of service for years or generations, have a peculiar interest; the pride of possession centres in them¹. The work that is done, not for a day or a year, but for a lifetime or for centuries, is held in special honour. This has given the great builders and masons such a peculiar place among craftsmen. But after all there are achievements which continue to be of even more permanent service to man. The work of the lawyer, who gives increasing precision and definiteness to our conception of what is right and fair, or the work of the doctor, who takes us a little farther in our knowledge of the conditions of health and the treatment of disease,—these are among the most lasting and most fruitful of all the services that can be rendered to mankind. They do not stand isolated and alone, as many other pieces of work

¹ Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, 16.

must do ; and their permanent value is to be appraised, not merely by considering each separately, but by seeing to what they lead.

Hence, when we test a man's work, and appraise it by its power of rendering continued service to man, we are led to see that we cannot take any merely physical qualities as criteria of permanence. All physical and material objects wear out and decay, sooner or later ; or what is perhaps more pathetic, they cease to meet any human requirement, and remain as monuments that tell us of days that are done with. They may have a sentimental interest and a beauty of their own ; but these are probably due to incidental circumstances and have little relation to their primary purpose. There is no more striking condemnation of the vanity of human effort than is furnished by the relics of great undertakings that have had their day. No physical work of any kind is of permanent service to the human race ; it wears out, or it rusts and crumbles away, or man learns to dispense with it. Even in the range of human experience we can see that it is not mere matter, but intellectual power, that really lasts and paves the path of progress.

Whether we look at the nature of the subject

on which it works, or at the long-continued results it effects, we may say that no human effort—conscious or unconscious—is so lasting as that which affects the minds and characters of men; here is the work which is best worth doing. It is not a mechanical impulse; it has a reproductive power and brings forth fruit. The personal influence of one human being upon another is clearly seen in particular departments of human activity. It is of course felt most strongly where there is the opportunity for direct contact. Great technical or artistic skill of any special kind is like to rouse the emulation of contemporaries, and to call forth imitation. Nor is its power necessarily exhausted in one generation; it may be communicated from unknown sources through physical objects¹. There is artistic inspiration to be drawn from the achievements of the sculptors of the past; the glass or the metal work or the building of bygone days, testifies to the skill of the craftsmen and may stir our admiration. But there have been such changes in human capacity and requirement, that the direct and practical influence they exercise is restricted. Methods of work have been revolutionised, or

¹ Cunningham, *Western Civilisation*, II. 279.

the objects on which artists lavished care have been superseded. The effect which is exercised on human culture by individual excellence in particular departments of skill is comparatively short-lived. It is when we consider the possibilities of modification and improvement of human character that we see how wide-spread and long-continued the influence of a human life may be. Vigour and force of character, as displayed by one man in his own business, are an example and encouragement to his acquaintance in any and every calling. It is only the exceptional man, engaged on some special task, who can hope to impress other people by his skill: but diligence and capacity and energy make themselves felt in any and every walk of life. The simple effort to do one's duty in one's own sphere may have a contagious force, that is none the less effective when it is exerted unconsciously.

It is also true that the influence of character can be more readily transmitted than that of skill. There are many forms of artistic skill which cannot be preserved, since they depend on the character of the medium employed. We cannot judge of the skill of ancient painters in the use of colour, still less of the power of any

actor, or the beauty of the singing of the Troubadours. But the power of character is not so restricted ; through the links of the family circle one impressive personality may leave a mark on a distant generation ; and there is also the possibility of putting virtuous action on record, and thus storing its effectiveness as a stimulus to right action. This gives us a criterion for judging of any biography,—whether it is successful in conveying to the larger world some part of the stimulus which a man's life afforded to his acquaintance. Apart from this, the labour spent on compiling personal history may be at once the meanest method of pandering to idle curiosity and the silliest form of adulation.

While all the offices of charity are good, there are certainly degrees in the lasting character of the various services which we may render to our fellow-men. It is good to give a cup of cold water and relieve physical distress, but the boon is of doubtful value if it is conferred in such a fashion as to weaken character. "That is the best charity," as Fuller says, "which so relieves people's wants as that they are still continued in their calling. For as he who teacheth one to swim though haply he will take him by the chin, yet he expecteth

“that the learner shall nimbly ply the oars of
“his hands and feet, and strive and struggle
“with all his strength to keep himself above
“water; so those who are beneficial to poor
“people may justly require of them that they
“use both their hands to work and feet to go
“to their calling, and themselves take all due
“labour, that they may not sink in the gulf of
“penury¹.” The calling forth of effort is the best
effect of beneficence directed to the amelioration
of human conditions; and this result is most
likely to be achieved by those who devote them-
selves to relieving the burdens which weigh on
human spirits. That was the most characteristic
work of Christ during His earthly sojourn; He
was anointed that He might heal the broken-
hearted. He has entrusted this privilege to
His followers; the sympathy which gives en-
couragement, as well as the nobility which calls
forth admiration, have an invigorating power;
and they are not, like material gifts, spent in
the process of distribution. It is well for any
man, who is struggling after right, to feel that
he does not stand in isolation, but that he
can claim the companionship which Emerson
prized:

¹ T. Fuller, *A Comment on Ruth* (1654), p. 190.

106 *The Appreciation of Work*

Be of good cheer, brave spirit ; steadfastly
Serve that low whisper thou hast served ; for know
God hath a select family of sons
Now scattered wide thro' earth, and each alone,
Who are thy spiritual kindred.

The virtue which comes out from a worthy human life has a far-reaching influence ; we shall be wise not to pretend to reckon it up prematurely.

Measure not the work
Until the day's out and the labour done ;

but who shall fix a limit when personal influence is worn out ? The living power of deeds done for the service of God and man, in stimulating the efforts of others, is not destroyed, indeed it is hardly checked, by death. That draws a veil over the memory of faults, and the lives of the miser or the sluggard may well be forgotten. They lived for themselves and they had their reward, and there is no need to recall them. But the memory of the just is blessed ; the mere thought of deeds, that were the expression of consecration to God or devotion to man, may kindle the sacred fire in another breast. Even when the days of man's working life are over, his influence may last and grow. Blessed therefore are the dead which

die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours and their works do follow them. In cherishing their memories we may win the benefit of uninterrupted intercourse. For "the secret of "goodness and greatness is in choosing whom "you will approach, and live with, in memory "and imagination, through the crowding obvious "people who seem to live with you¹."

We may perhaps find confirmation of the soundness of the principles we have reached, when we see that they can be verified in other fields of human experience. I have been dealing in these lectures with the activities of life, and have tried to show that, since the Gospel transforms human consciousness, Christianity has special teaching of its own to give about the duty of work. We have seen, in turn, that from the Christian standpoint, work is not only consistent with, but a mark of the highest human dignity. It is a discipline which may be dutifully but willingly accepted; it can be deliberately directed to carrying out the divine intention, and consciously subjected to divine appreciation. These ethical principles apply to the whole range of human conduct, not merely to the activities of life. Christ took man's nature upon Him;

¹ *Letters of R. and E. B. Browning*, II. 318.

on earth He was a worker, but He was a sufferer too; and the saints have been called not only to carry on the work of Christ, but to fill up that which is behind of His sufferings. In their inner character and spiritual significance both paths of duty have much in common; in both there may be the will to accept a divine vocation; there may be the effort to bear as well as to do; and the example which shines in the heroism of suffering has an undying influence. In the most widely different circumstances the same principles hold good as to personal duty and the cultivation of holiness; for suffering, like labour and all else, may be sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

CONCLUSION.

THE attempt to discuss the duty of work, as seen from the Christian standpoint, has led me to touch on high themes; such doctrines as the Fatherhood of God and the Communion of Saints have a very direct bearing on conduct. The more closely we examine Christian teaching, the more clearly do we see that there is a

difference between our own and other religions on this particular topic in ethics—the duty of work. Since this is so, we are forced to disagree with the position which was taken by the Cambridge Rational Theologians, who were in so many ways the pioneers of a liberal movement in religious thought. They rose above the wearisome controversies of the day and protested that there was good among the men of all forms of religion. There was a freshness and a force in their statement of a truth that has come to be a mere newspaper platitude. Yet while we honour and admire them, we can see that they did not guard their position sufficiently. It is true that all spiritual religions alike are good, but it does not follow that all are alike good. Christianity has doctrines to declare—as other religions have not—about the duty of work and the manner of doing it, which bring the highest and most ennobling motives to bear on everyday affairs.

With all its merits and power, the teaching of these Rational Theologians was somewhat onesided; they did not take sufficient account of all the various elements in human nature. Anthony Tuckney, who had been Whichcote's tutor when he was an undergraduate at

Emmanuel, laid his finger on the weak point in their system, "Mind and Understanding is all; "Heart and Will little spoken of¹." They laid stress on the witness of reason, and distrusted the influence of passion as a merely disturbing element. They recognised that the presentation of truth gave rise to an artistic pleasure, but they saw no need to appeal to feeling in order to render intellectual truth more effective;

And thought can never do the work of love.

The Cambridge Platonists paid the penalty of their onesidedness. Their teaching proved most interesting in academic circles, but it had little influence in the great world; it seemed to have so little contact with actual life; their doctrine appealed to men who preferred to keep aloof from the controversies of the day; but it must be now regarded as a mere backwater which lay off the main stream of progress in philosophical and religious thought².

Their accentuation of the universal element in thought led them to attach little importance to that which is individual and personal.

¹ *Eight Letters of Dr A. Tuckney and Dr B. Whichcote* (1753), p. 38.

² Bp Westcott, in *Masters in English Theology*, edited by Bp Barry, p. 170.

Feeling is an element which has a special character in each individual consciousness; and by discounting it, as they did, they tended to drift away from the Christian doctrine as to the persistent existence of the individual human soul. The mystic may aspire, not merely after uninterrupted intercourse with God, but after such union that his very being is merged and lost in the Divine Life. Sterry's language is, sometimes at least, not incompatible with this interpretation. But there was besides a more immediate danger, which is worth noting from its bearing on our own subject. Exclusive consideration of the Highest Good seemed to tend to a disparagement of the lesser goods and a disregard of the particular duties of life. This was a tendency, against which Cudworth's daughter, Damaris, felt bound to protest¹; as Lady Masham she had moved into a circle where the subjects which had absorbed her father's interests were discussed from a different standpoint and with more fruitful results. Subsequent thought in England owes less to the transcendent speculation of Cudworth than to the careful analysis of the individual consciousness which occupied John Locke.

¹ *Discourse of Love of God* (1696), 27.

The Rational Theologians were of course aware that religion must take hold upon the individual life and not merely remain an intellectual doctrine. "It is the work and business "of religion and of our lives to reconcile the "temper of our spirits to the rule of righteousness, and to incorporate the principles of our "religion into the complexion of our minds¹." They recognised that 'institutions' had a relative value as contributing with greater or less success to this end. Whichcote² and More³ both preferred forms of prayers; and the latter was eager for the composition and use of additional Christian hymns and the observation of particular festivals. There is no reason for surprise that at the Restoration they should have gladly conformed to the Church of England; and Symon Patrick⁴ busied himself to ensure them a hearty welcome. Still it was only natural that they should lay very great stress on preaching, as the ordinance by which Christian truths might be expounded and brought home to the intellect. The Earl of Shaftesbury,

¹ Whichcote, *Aphorisms*, 221.

² Works of B. Whichcote (1751), II. 327.

³ *Grand Mystery of Godliness*, in *Theological Works*, 376.

⁴ S. P., *A brief account of the new sect of Latitude men together with some reflections upon the new philosophy*, 1662.

who valued Whichcote's discourses so highly and edited some of them for publication, yet raised a question as to the effectiveness of the weapons on which these academic preachers relied¹; and the revival of Christianity as a power on the life and thought of England did not come on the lines they projected. It was brought about when the 'enthusiasm,' which they deprecated as mischievous, was roused by the instrumentality of the Wesleys.

Cudworth and More were men of extraordinary learning, but in fastening on the analogies between the results of different sciences and the similarities in the teaching of different philosophers, they often seem to be somewhat haphazard and uncritical. They probably paid little attention to the minute and patient studies on which some of their contemporaries were then engaged. Lightfoot was Master of S. Catharine's, and Beveridge and Cave had already come up from Archdeacon Johnston's school at Oakham to carry on their studies in Latin, Greek and Hebrew at S. John's under Whichcote's opponent Tuckney. These men were helping to raise an edifice of accurate knowledge of primi-

¹ Shaftesbury, Preface to Edition of 1698, reprinted in Whichcote's *Works*, III. i.

tive Christianity as it had actually been. The polemical interest in which such investigations were usually carried on was certainly distasteful to the Rational Theologians ; but at least these patient students accumulated a mass of evidence in orderly form. More modern scholars have been able to correct their work or to add to their material and to undertake the task of interpreting it with greater confidence ; but they have not been unmindful of their debt to seventeenth-century enthusiasts in patristic and historical studies. Later generations have looked back to them as their masters ; but there have been few indeed, beyond their personal circle, who have been conscious of any debt to the Rational Theologians.

In our age, as in theirs, there is much weariness of the divisions among Christians, and we cannot fail to admire men who strove so earnestly to rise above the angry controversies of their day. We shall do well, however, to take a warning from their comparative failure, and to be careful not to repeat the mistake made by Whichcote and his friends. It is fatuous to attempt to ignore the differences which exist among professing Christians as merely trivial

or unimportant. To cry Peace, Peace, is a tiresome banality, when there is no peace; and the exhortation to sink minor differences is for the most part an impertinence. It implies that the speaker can judge accurately of the relative importance of different issues; but this is an assumption that none of us has a right to make. No one can be certain as to which of the straws on the surface is really significant of the deeper currents. Conscientious differences in religion, or in that which affects religion, are always real; it has been found impossible to suppress them; to ignore them is idle and rouses the suspicion of disingenuousness. The best hope of removing differences lies in laying them seriously to heart; and this implies an effort to treat conscientious opinion of every kind with respect. The Cambridge Rational Theologians were roused from their academic calm by the fanaticism of Papists and Quakers. As Whichcote explains¹: "A great deal of contemptible, "and unreasonable, and ridiculous stuff passeth "in many parts of the world, for religion.....It "seems to me to be one of the greatest prodigies in the world that men, that are rational "and intelligent, should admit that for religion,

¹ *Works*, III. 247.

“which for its shallowness, emptiness and insignificance falls under the just reproof and condemnation of reason.” He goes on to particularise by referring to articles of faith that are “superadded in the Romish church, founded neither in nature nor grace.....Can it be imagined, that any man that is honest, and hath a mind to reconcile himself unto God, should believe such sorry things as these?” More insists¹ that “it is a very dangerous and false kind of resignation, in those that would pretend to a more than ordinary pitch of religion, to bid adieu to the rules of humanity and reason under the pretence of the exercise of self-denial. In thus giving away their own will in those things that are laudable and good, they give room for the devil to enter and possess them, soul and body, and to drive them to the most vile, sordid, the most uncivil and ridiculous, nay the most wicked and impious actions that human nature is liable to; as is too much already found in that fanatic sect of the Quakers, who, under the pretence of crucifying the dictates of reason and humanity and everything they find their spirit carried to, smother that lamp of God in them,

¹ *Grand Mystery of Godliness*, in *Works*, 53.

“and being thus got in the dark, are the scorn “and laughing-stock of Satan.” Such expressions of contempt neither conciliate nor convince. If we can learn to speak respectfully of opinions and habits with which we do not sympathise, we shall have taken the first step towards finding a common ground.

So long, however, as we are content to agree to differ and to assert every man’s right to his own opinion, we are merely reconciling ourselves to live in a state of religious anarchy. If we really hope to come to be of one mind, we must all begin by being serious in the endeavour to know what it is we ourselves hold. The man who does not understand his own position clearly, fails to see what his actual relations, either of agreement or disagreement with other people, are, and cannot hope to readjust them consciously. We need to learn where we stand towards other people so that we may not only be able to compare our views intelligently with those of others, to discriminate between them and know how far we can sympathise, but also to agree on the criteria by which the worth of individual opinions may be best gauged. One standard for individual opinion is to be found by examining the bearing which similar views

have had in the past on the common life of the Christian Church. There have always been controversies within the Church and there is much to be learned from them, if we are patient enough to try to reach their inner meaning. We can see that differences of opinion have sometimes contributed to catholicity by accentuating some element of truth that was being overlooked ; we can see that other controversies arose in connection with the political events or the intellectual fashions of an age, and that they had no lasting significance for Christian life. The first great function of Christian institutions has been to preserve and diffuse the supernatural truths revealed to mankind nineteen centuries ago ; and as we look back on the past we can see that the opinion of this or that teacher, on speculative points, is to be condemned because, as a matter of fact, it tended to reduce the effectiveness of the Church as a living witness for the Spiritual and Eternal. It is well that the presentation of the truth in each age should take account of the conditions and sentiments of the time, but there is always a danger lest attempts at conforming to current opinion should affect, not only the manner of expressing God's message to the world, but the substance of the message

itself. That we cannot apply this principle directly to the controversies of the present day is true enough ; but there is some light to be drawn from the past if we are at pains to interpret it. We need not go to history with the view of searching for precedents to support one side or another of conflicting opinions. Church History is the record of a living growth ; and it shows us what has been discarded and done with. When we cease to idealise particular ages of Christian life and no longer look on them as authoritative for us to-day, but are prepared to weigh and learn from all Christian experience as recorded for us, we shall have taken a second step towards a common ground.

Religious institutions and ordinances have differed greatly at various times and in different parts of Christendom ; but they are not to be discussed as mere matters of taste and fancy, for there is one end which all have in view. They admittedly exist as means to the promotion of personal Christian life. Though we cannot pretend to judge here and now as to the success of diverse systems in attaining this end, we can at least consider the pains taken and the wisdom of the means by which they are each working towards this aim. It

would be a third step towards a common ground if we could come to closer agreement in our conception of Christian character. It hardly suffices to fix on one particular excellence—such as gentleness—and rely on it as a badge which indicates a man's inner nature ; a better criterion may be found by considering how far the various dispositions and traits have been influenced by the distinctively Christian habits of mind which have come to light in our discussions of work. Those who in their work aim at doing their best and are content to leave the results to God, who have the power of deliberately accepting His will and of consciously submitting to His judgment, have at least entered upon the path by which the greatest heights of Christian virtue may be attained ; they walk in the light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

APPENDIX.

I. EGOISM IN POLITICAL LIFE¹.

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.—S. John xii. 25.

When any great crime is perpetrated, such as the treacherous and cold-blooded murder of the President of a great State, we are inclined to say that the man must have been mad—and perhaps no other line of defence is possible to the counsel of the accused. The whole thing is so futile; the blow is struck, the man who does the deed attains a notoriety which he may have craved; but after all he has merely shattered himself in his puny rebellion against the established order; we find it hard to believe that anyone who glories in such folly is sane. Nor even when we find that there are many such men in the world, that there is a regular propagandism of such doctrines, do we find it easy to regard anarchism as anything but a contagious madness, a sort of rabies which must be stamped out, and cannot be dealt with in any other fashion.

And supposing this is true—that anarchism is a mere disease and an incurable disease—we are surely

¹ Chevin Obit Sermon, preached in Great S. Mary's, 22 Sept., 1901, before the Mayor and Corporation of Cambridge.

all the more bound to look a little deeper and ask what are the conditions which have fostered it? Whence has it arisen, how has it spread? We should not be content to give it a name and call it a disease, and leave it at that; it is a disease which attacks modern society, which has very little that is analogous to it in the ancient or the mediaeval world; it is in a way new. To say it is a mere madness, and ought to be stamped out, is merely idle, since we have reason to believe that it is a recurring disorder in the great and flourishing communities of the day. In order to deal with it effectively we must try to get at the source of the mischief; it is only in this way that we can have any hope of obtaining immunity from similar attacks in the future.

The anarchist deliberately despairs of human society as at present constituted, and desires to destroy it utterly; and why? Because he regards it as thoroughly corrupt; he holds that privileged persons in some lands and powerful classes in others have seized the reins of power, and govern entirely in their own interest, regardless of the public good. He holds that this is so deeply ingrained in all existing communities that there is no hope of any cure, and that it is necessary to sweep it all away, in the hope that it may crystallise in better forms. When a man who holds this opinion startled us rudely by committing a crime that shocks the civilised world, are we not bound to consider how far there is, I will not say any justification, but any excuse for the socialist's charge? Personally I do not think that anyone can

deny that it has some apparent basis in fact. In the larger political life of the State we can see that no action can be taken which does not affect some interest; there can be no increase of the army or demand for war material that does not favour some calling and some trades, at the expense of the rest; there is no tax that can be levied that does not affect some interests more than others; in many quarters there is an openly expressed and wide-spread jealousy of the very rich and an eager desire to pillage them, in entire disregard of the probable effect on the community. Through the whole range of political life—and in a much smaller degree of municipal life—personal private interests are always present. And there has been some excuse at times for saying that these private interests appeared to be paramount, and that the public welfare was subordinated to the gain of particular groups or sections in the community. This allegation is frequently put forward by partisans at election times; it is insisted upon with special vehemence by American journalists in regard to their own government; and it is because of the wide-spread belief—whether true or false—that the government of the United States has been conducted in the interest of a small coterie of millionaires that the Executive of the whole community has been so specially obnoxious to the anarchists. It is not our place to judge others, or to try to discriminate too closely into this matter, but it is our business to judge ourselves. Private personal interests must enter into public affairs; they cannot be excluded,

though they may be deliberately disregarded and consciously set aside. It is when we look at our public duties from the religious standpoint and fulfil them for God's sake and as in God's sight, that the temptations of personal advantage will most surely sink into insignificance. It is possible to have such a clear grasp of the fact that all public duty is a trust, that a man shall carry it out sedulously when it is to his own hindrance, and shall also carry it out with a perfectly good conscience when it is to his own gain. But there is constant need for the cultivation of public spirit, of the renunciation of all temptation to turn public opportunities to private account, whether as citizens or as rulers. And I believe that it is only in so far as civilised nations are successful in this matter, and rise above not merely the fact but the very appearance of corruption, that they will deprive anarchists of the shadow of an excuse, and render themselves immune from this disease.

But, whatever the evils of our social and political system may be, the anarchist, as it seems, would hardly take such a pessimist view of them if he looked at it fairly; his hopelessness and despair for the world around him is largely due to the bitterness of his own heart—the iron that has entered into his soul. He finds himself confined, restricted, he never seems to get a chance; he wants to assert his own individuality; but the necessity of drudgery and the bounds of convention hem him in on every side, and he resents it. In all this he is but the creature of his age, one who has allowed the tendencies which are consciously

present in the minds of most of us to carry him away. For we are all inclined to assert ourselves—to demand a right, as the common phrase goes, to live our own lives, and to go our own way—to speak as if discipline of any sort were an evil, even if it is necessary. Politicians devise means for cultivating a spirit of independence, and educators meet to discuss how they may foster what they call a “strenuous individuality.” This sort of thing is in the air; we are all infected with it, all encouraged more or less to give rein to the craving to indulge our own self-will—and the anarchist in defying society altogether is only giving full expression to that claim to go our own way, and have nobody meddle with us, which is so widely current to-day. And we shall never have any immunity from anarchism until we recognise that this spirit is in itself wrong; that we are each and all bound to struggle against it, that the attempt to go our own ways and live our own lives is mischievous. “He that loveth his life shall lose it”; we can find our true existence, not in holding ourselves apart from society and railing at it, but by taking our share in it as we best can—humbly and patiently. It is the man who undertakes the drudgery of work and submits himself to the discipline of daily routine, who forms his character so that he can take a worthy place in the world. He does not vainly assert himself against society, but is willing to become a part of society, and to reap the credit and satisfaction which come from doing his duty in that state of life to which it shall please God to call him. It is thus that he may find a

better life, as consciously part of a great human purpose, as an inheritor of a grand past, and as contributing a little best towards the realising of a better future for mankind.

The idealising of self-will, that is the very thing of anarchism; are any of us free from temptation to indulge that spirit? are we prepared to recognise the fact that there can be no brotherhood among men, unless we are ready to renounce it? We should be content to try and conform ourselves on recognised models, till we do not much want to think our own thoughts as to share the choicest and noblest thoughts of other men; and not desire to go our own ways but to adopt the best of human practice, and to get the most from human intercourse. It is in losing personal idiosyncrasy and outgrowing our own crude opinions that we may attain the fuller and better life which a man may enjoy—not as a self-willed egoist, but as a member of a human race.

I have spoken of earthly things—of self-renunciation as an affair of expediency almost, as the condition which opens up the best possibilities of self-development—of finding our lives: but this is a matter where our Christian faith points to the way by which we may fulfil this human inspiration most wisely—it is Jesus, our best model to form ourselves upon. We are not left to the fashions of the moment, or to choose haphazard some hero of the past; we have a perfect model of human life set before us in the man Christ Jesus. We are called not merely to go back or

attainments of other ages, but to advance farther and farther in insight and in goodness; we are called to enter into the knowledge of God, learning to think His thoughts, and see things from His point of view, and thus form ourselves after His image. That is the mere duty of all Christian men to-day; and in the recognition of this duty and the effort to fulfil it there lies, not merely the salvation of our minds from querulous discontent, but the best and truest hope of delivering human society from the dangers that are besetting it increasingly.

II. THE CONSECRATION OF SECULAR LIFE¹.

Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.—Gal. i. 8.

There are in the present day many gospels that base their appeal to men chiefly on the ground that they have got beyond old-fashioned Christianity; they offer salvation from the ills of life on new and improved methods, which S. Paul certainly does not sanction and indeed appears to condemn. There is, on the one hand, the gospel of so-called Christian Science, with its confident assertion of the unreality

¹ An Address to the Christian Social Union, Boston, Mass., May, 1899, and reprinted from the *Harvard Monthly*.

of thorns in the flesh, and all other bodily pain. It boasts a contempt for all empirical science and ordinary remedies, such as would hardly have been shared by the intimate friend of S. Luke—the beloved physician. It checks the expression of kindly sentiment in a way that would have shocked the warm-hearted man, who was so solicitous for S. Timothy's often infirmities. The teaching of some self-constituted ministering angel may be the highest and purest truth; but at least Christian Science is not the gospel S. Paul preached; his was a much more mundane doctrine.

But there is also a gospel of kindly philanthropy, which has many disciples. It does not err on the side of exaggerated spirituality; its followers are keenly alive to the misery and monotony of the lives of the poor, and devote themselves to cheering them. It is good for people to be amused; it is most desirable that everyone should have opportunities of enjoying the purely human pleasures of good talk and genial intercourse; those are to be greatly pitied who do not appreciate them. But though these things are good, they are not a substitute for religion; to speak of them as if they were, is to ignore one side of our Lord's teaching. The mawkish sentimentality which prates about peace and good will, and denounces Christian asceticism as morbid folly, has little in common with the feeling of the Apostle who cried, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." A Christianity that is silent about the cross, and the duty of taking up the cross

personally, is but a perverted gospel. S. Paul was an ascetic, who kept his body in subjection and was keenly alive to the danger of loving this present world. The genial doctrine of leading men to their highest good along the broad and smooth way, which all are ready to enter, and down the line of least resistance, may be a brilliant discovery in modern ethical science, but it is not the gospel that S. Paul preached.

But we, who are only trying, steadily and patiently, to hold to the old faith and walk in the old paths, and are satisfied to abide in the Apostle's doctrine, and fellowship and breaking of bread and prayers, know that the gospel of the grace of God has to do with that which is spiritual, and also with that which is natural. We know that it was often difficult, in bygone days, to give its due value to each side of the Christian life. We know that old errors are always reappearing under new forms, and that we must watch and be on the alert, if we would guard ourselves against them. Christ accepted the natural life with its physical conditions; He manifested the spiritual life and its eternal powers. Both aspects of truth are important; but if we over-accentuate one, we are only too likely to underrate the other. Indeed, the exaggerated appreciation of physical comfort and recreation, which is so widely current to-day, is in all probability a reaction against the false spirituality of a bygone generation. Puritanism, with its sternness and earnestness, has looked askance at enjoyment of every sort; but we, who note this defect,

should beware of going to the opposite extreme. For physical well-being and healthy enjoyment—like all other good things—may be abused. We may set such store by them as to become the slaves of luxury; we may give such thought to them as to dissipate our lives in mere frivolity. The Puritans were right to shun these sins; and we, in these rather flippant times, have much need to be on our guard against them ourselves, and to be careful lest we seem to condone them in others. We do not advance matters much by merely running counter to Puritan practice; we want to look carefully at the precise nature of their error; and then perhaps we may be able to correct it, and so to regain the lost balance, and stand firmly on the old truth in its fulness and completeness.

We may, I think, detect the nature of their mistake if we look at one point in Puritan practice, and consider their attitude in regard to the day of rest. They were so careful of the letter of the Fourth Commandment, and so entirely missed its spirit. The Jewish Sabbath was instituted to be a day of rest indeed, but not of mere vacuous idleness; it gave the weekly opportunity of learning how to enjoy the good things of life unselfishly and thankfully, and therefore without sin. Its placid hours were a protest against fussy anxiety in regard to the future, and feverish haste to be rich. We sometimes remark on the folly of a man who heaps up money all his life and never takes time to enjoy it, till at last he loses the power of enjoying it altogether; and the psalmist noted it, too. "It is but lost labour that ye

“haste to rise up early and so late take rest, and eat
“the bread of carefulness, for so he giveth his beloved
“sleep.” It was a duty for the Israelite to lay aside the
cares of business and enjoy its reward in thankfulness
to God, one day in the week. There is a true Sabbath
ring about the preacher’s words, “It is good and
“comely for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the
“good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun
“all the days of his life, which God giveth him, for it
“is his portion.”

But Puritanism eliminated this element of festivity
from the day of rest, and by so doing changed the
character of the institution, and obscured the truth
to which it bore witness. Selfish and godless indul-
gence is wrong; but the enjoyment of God’s gifts,
when hallowed by a sense of thankfulness to Him
and the remembrance of the needs of others, is right
and good. It is not the things that we eat or drink
or enjoy that matter; the use of, and abstinence from,
food and drink and such externals are in themselves
things indifferent; there is a right or a wrong use of
them according to circumstances. In the last resort,
the manner and spirit in which we use them render
our conduct good or bad. This at least is S. Paul’s
doctrine; circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision
is nothing; the meat of beasts slain at heathen altars
was an allowable food, “neither if we eat are we the
“better, nor if we eat not are we the worse.” To him
it was all a matter of avoiding the mischief that
comes from creating scandal, and of really keeping the
thought of God before him in all he did. “Why

"am I evil spoken of for that for which I give
"thanks?"

The Sabbath was made for man, for his refreshment on one day, so that he might serve God by doing his work heartily and well in the remainder of the week. It might be a day of rest, for that recuperates after drudgery; it might also be a day of recreation, since that is the remedy for worry. Puritanism laid down rules as to the things that are admissible or inadmissible on the Sabbath; but there is as much moral danger in the unqualified approval of rest, as in their unqualified condemnation of manly sports. And thus Puritanism failed to give useful guidance; it had no training to offer as to the spirit in which this day of leisure should be spent, so that its hours may not be merely wasted in God-forgetful idleness.

We shall learn to spend the day of rest aright, if we try to make it an opportunity of cultivating the power of unselfish enjoyment of God's gifts,—the joy of tasks accomplished and of work well done; the joy in the fruits of labour, which God has blessed; the joy in the achievements of "famous men, by whom the "Lord hath brought great glory through his great "power from the beginning, such as found out "musical tunes and recited ditties in writing." All the glories of art, all the triumphs of learning, all the bounties of Nature, have come from His Hand, that we may delight in them. "Every good and perfect "gift is from above and cometh down from the "Father of Lights"; we need not put them from us;

but let us strive to use them all aright, with the sense that they come from Him and an earnest effort that the manner in which we take our pleasure shall meet His approval.

If this is our habitual aim we shall, then, I think, be less inclined to forget His best gifts or to slight them. The Israelite was taught to take thankful delight on the Sabbath in all the blessings of this life, but we as Christians have offered to us the means of grace and the hope of glory. The leisure of Sunday has not been spent to best purpose, if we have failed to enjoy the sense of Christ's presence, when two or three are gathered together in His name,—if we have no feeling of thankfulness for His unspeakable gift. But if we seek to be in the Spirit as we kneel at His altar on the Lord's Day, all the other gifts of God may be consecrated, too, by our conscious recognition that they are His. All we enjoy of nature and art and friendship and success, all the things indifferent, become right, when we have laid them consciously before Him and brought back the warrant, to rejoice frankly and heartily, from the very throne of God.

It is in our worship and by the conscious effort to consecrate our lives, that we may learn what pleasures are allowable and right for us—so as to enjoy them simply and unhesitatingly as from God. But Puritanism, by rejecting all pleasures, turned men's minds away from the source of light and the method of seeking it. Those who condemn, in the name of Christ, what God has not condemned, are guilty of a terrible blunder; they lay a burden on tender con-

sciences, while they are only too likely to bring religion into contempt with thoughtful men. Puritanism, from the rigidity of its principles, and from its mistaken attempt to distinguish various kinds of action as in themselves right or wrong, proved itself incompetent to deal with any question of practical Christianity. It seems so simple to forbid absolutely the use of things that may be abused ; but to do so is to divert the mind from dealing with the practical questions, *How are we to make friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness* in any particular case? How are we to distinguish the right from the wrong use of things that are in themselves allowable? Puritanism may have mended public manners long ago; but it has done much to discredit Christian Ethical teaching, by obscuring the true issues in regard to right and wrong, and in thus confusing the moral judgment on the ordinary affairs of life.

The new facilities for travelling and sight-seeing have made this topic of amusement, and the right and wrong enjoyment of pleasure, a much more prominent question in our day than it ever was before. But after all, every age has its own problems to face; as we look back along the centuries in the Anglican Church, we see how one great prelate after another made his contribution to the solution of some pressing practical difficulties in the lives of Christian people. We may remember how in an age of violence and self-seeking Bishop Richard of London applied his high ideal of Christian duty to political life, and set us an example of bringing religious motives to bear

on the administration of national finance¹. Or, if we look a century later, we may see how Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln—the learned theologian and canonist—was not too much engrossed in controversy to neglect the duty of bringing Christianity to bear on the management of his great establishment². Good household management was the one social and economic and educational problem of the day, and he had an eye on all the varied activities, agricultural and industrial, which it included; he had to consider the provision to be made for the poor and to remember the influence of the household as a school of life and discipline in manners. Once more, in the fourteenth century, when the whole social system was strained, and anarchy seemed to be spreading everywhere under the leadership of the friars, the acute intellect of Richard Fitzralph of Armagh was brought to bear on the Christian conception of property, and he gave us admirable teaching on the responsibilities of the rich³. Then again, at the Reformation period, in a time of progress and change, when old urban and rural methods were being rapidly displaced in favour of new practices introduced by pushing men, we have the beautiful dialogue in which Hugh Latimer of Worcester strove to reconcile a real condemnation of the greed of gain with free play for advance and

¹ *Dialogus de Scaccario*, 1.

² *The Rules of S. Robert in Walter of Henley's Husbandry*, edited by E. Lamond, 121.

³ *De pauperie salvatoris*, in Wyclif's *De dominio divino*, edited by R. Lane Poole, 257.

improvement¹. And later, when the wave of Puritanism had subsided, we see how Episcopal leaders tried to deal with social problems as they arose; George Berkeley of Cloyne devoted himself to the question of the duty of a Christian nation towards native races²; and Shute Barington of Durham called attention to the best means of meeting the evils of truck and dishonesty in retail trading³. There is a noble tradition in the Anglican Church of saintly wisdom in so many phases of practical Christianity.

These all served their own generations by the will of God and fell on sleep; they had not to deal with our special problems, but they wrestled, earnestly and thoughtfully, with the difficulties of their own day. Their teaching has been preserved for us to study if we will, but at least let us profit by their examples. At any rate we may remember this; we dare not try to sever the spiritual from the natural and deal with either apart; we need grace to cherish a true faith and to cultivate deep devotion, so that we may be habitually striving to bring the spiritual to bear upon the natural—all the time. There are perplexities enough, but we shall not quail before them if we hold to the old faith, and join in the worship which Christ

¹ *Discourse of the Common Weal*, edited by E. Lamond, pp. xxi., 57.

² *A proposal for the better supplying of Churches in our foreign plantations and for converting the savage Americans to Christianity* (1725), in *Works*, III. 213.

³ *Reports of the Society for Bettering the Conditions of the Poor*, II. 27 (24 Feb. 1797).

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ordained, and rely on the old promises that He will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. So doing we may find in our own experience how true it is that "all the riddles of life *solvantur ambulando* for those "who walk with God."

III. THE CONSECRATION OF INTELLECT¹.

Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.—2 Cor. x. 5.

Some phases of religious feeling come to many of us naturally and instinctively. The psalmist's expression of his sense of dependence on God finds an echo in our hearts, we can join in it heartily and use his words as our own. We all recognise that our lives are compassed about by forces we cannot control, and that, however we guard against them, accident or disease may strike us helpless. We all know, too, that we cannot command success, and that however strenuous we may be in our work, circumstances may be against us, so that we may never get the chance of doing our very best. Where other men have failed, we too may be unlucky. And so, for those of us who believe in a God at all—in an overruling Providence, that devises the course of the

¹ Preached at Harvard University, March, 1899, and reprinted from the Lennoxville *Mitre*.

Universe, and in His infinite wisdom watches over every link in the chain of progress and cares for every one of His creatures—it is easy and natural to commit our external circumstances to God, and to lay all the uncertainties and anxieties of life before our Heavenly Father, in whose infinite love and infinite wisdom we trust. We cannot but wish to cast all our cares on Him who cares for us.

There are times too, in the lives of many of us, when we feel our own frailty, and cannot but turn to the Infinite God for strength and courage. We may have set some high aim before us, or entered on some line of conduct that we see quite plainly to be the path of duty—and then we have failed, utterly and ignominiously, to be true to ourselves. As we look back with shame on such personal weakness, we cannot understand it; there is a terrible mystery in finding, with S. Paul, a law in our members warring against the law of the mind. Discouragement may almost lead us to despair, and to say, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” It is well for those who at such a crisis in their lives can come to know that the bonds of those sins, which in their frailty they have committed, have been severed by Jesus Christ our Lord; and who learn to turn daily to Him Who is able to keep them from falling. It may come to be natural to those who have once realised their own frailty, to look habitually to God for strength in the struggle with evil, and so to commit their usual life to Him.

So far the instincts of a religious nature may carry

us in regard to our physical life or our moral life; but, for many of us it is hard to dedicate our intellectual life to God, or even to feel that we ought to do so. Human reason is so wonderful—the power, as we commonly say, that distinguishes man from the brutes—the token of man's birthright as made in the image of God. It seems as if our highest duty were just this—to be true, each one of us, to our own reason; to take its guidance, whatever it is, and to follow boldly where it leads. We see the triumphs of human intelligence,—the manner in which it has forced their secrets from so many of the glories of nature,—how it has analysed, and measured and co-ordinated; “Surely,” we argue with ourselves, “our first duty as intellectual beings and lovers of truth is to be true to ourselves, and our own intelligence, and our own judgment, and our own convictions. “Anything else,” as we think, “we might yield to the Christ, but our minds are surely our very own, and we will not have this man to rule over our thoughts.” S. Paul's is a hard saying, and we are tempted to go away sorrowful. Perhaps as we face the matter, we cannot feel that it is honest and right to bring every thought, consciously, deliberately, into captivity to the obedience of Christ. It seems as if to do so would be to tamper with the Creator's greatest gift—the gift of Reason.

Yet, after all, as we look back on the world or out on the world we cannot but notice how often, how terribly, this greatest gift has been and may be wasted. Those who live long in a University town, as I

have done, cannot but recall men, who did so brilliantly at college and seemed to have such splendid careers before them, and yet it was frittered away, and came to nothing; their lives were miserable failures; and while we mourn over the loss of such genius to the world, should we not take the disappointment in their lives as a warning for our own? There are indeed many mistakes into which we may fall in the intellectual life, and against which we may have a safeguard, if we can but consciously and habitually seek for God's personal guidance in the use we make of His noblest gift, and submit the thoughts of our minds to Him.

I. In these days there is such danger, as there never was before, of onesidedness in our intellectual development. The field of possible knowledge is so vast, that none of us can survey it all; if we aim at having accurate knowledge of some portion of God's Universe, then, since life is short, and the years that can be given to study are fleeting, we must concentrate our attention on some few things and be content to neglect the rest. There must be specialisation, if knowledge is to be in any sense thorough and sound, and the very process of specialisation involves a conscious and deliberate disregard of other branches of knowledge. As our interests become more and more absorbed in our chosen occupation and we feel its importance more intensely, we are sorely tempted to blame the men who have turned away from our favourite pursuit, and perhaps even to despise the lines of study that we have ourselves

neglected. We do not feel the interest in them, or see the vistas they open up ; and so we are apt not merely to specialise, as we must, but to become one-sided ; to refuse either to look beyond the boundaries of our chosen field, or to try to combine our own conclusions with the results obtained by others, or even to co-ordinate our outer and our inner experience. It is easy to withdraw our eyes from much of the Universe, for the sake of our studies ; and then, it may be very hard to readjust our vision, and aim at looking at life with a truer focus. There are concave mirrors which reflect each detail clearly enough and yet render the whole group incongruous and absurd, because everything is shown in wrong proportion. It is sad indeed if a human mind should have some such twist,—should see every detail with perfect clearness, and yet distort and caricature it all. And if we fear this danger for ourselves, we shall do well to turn our gaze upwards—to God Himself ; with the full sense of our limitations, we may look reverently towards His Omniscience, and adore. Try to think of a knowledge that is all that we strive after ; of One Who knows the farthest realms of the Universe we dimly descry ; Who knows all the physical order we try to unfold ; Who knows all the secret course of human progress we strive to unravel ; Who knows ourselves,—our inmost thoughts, our hopes, our fears ; Who knows all the future to which He is guiding us while we can only spell a little of the past we have left behind. Yes, and just because He knows all, He knows everything rightly, in its due place and proper

proportion. And as we adore the Divine Omniscience may we not seek for grace to enter into the thoughts of God, that we too, though we know so little, may know it all as He does, in due proportion? We cannot grasp much, but we can hope to learn to see the things that fall within our range of vision aright, as God sees them and therefore as they are.

II. There is another danger in the intellectual life against which it is difficult to guard ourselves. It is hard to maintain a perfect and constant love of Truth; because this implies an habitual willingness to admit our errors and blunders, and an anxiety to correct them. We are all so apt, at every stage of academic life, to stick to the opinions we have formed, honestly, and painstakingly, and to resent the necessity of reconsidering them, and of owning—even to ourselves—that we are wrong. It is hard for the student to admit that the exercise on which he spent such pains is vitiated by a flaw he had failed to observe; it is harder still for the lecturer to confess to a class that he has made a blunder, perhaps a bad blunder, and thus to seem to fall from the pedestal of the authoritative guide to the humbler status of a fellow-student. It is hardest of all for the author to take criticism, perhaps spiteful criticism, wisely, and to make it the occasion not of trying to defend himself, but of learning more. And just because it is so hard—we might say so unnatural—to do all this, we must school ourselves to appreciate the pettiness of self-justifications and the loathsomeness of persistence in recognised errors; and this we may do if we raise

our thoughts to Him Who cannot err, and ponder on the insight that cannot be misled. In the splendour of that Eternal Truth we may feel the shame of the petty passions that warp our judgment, and seek to be delivered from them; we may ask for grace to become perfectly honest, perfectly ready to confess mistakes, always willing to acknowledge and therefore to retrieve a blunder. It has been said of some very learned men that they were marvellously humble; it is perhaps more true to say that, because they were very humble and have not cared for their reputation, they came to be so learned.

If we would thus strive to avoid onesidedness and intellectual dishonesty, and bring every thought into captivity to Him, Who is not only the Way and the Life, but also the Truth, then we shall do well to set ourselves from time to time to review our knowledge in the light of our Christian Faith. Each week as it comes and goes, at such a centre as this, is sure to find us with some new acquirement that has roused our interest, or that has given us the keen intellectual joy we feel when problems that puzzled us seem at last to be solved. Surely this purest joy, like all the lesser gladness of life, should be hallowed in our weekly sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; so that each advance in knowledge of every kind shall become to us the occasion of clearer insight into the mind of God. As we come to know more of Nature, her indefinite duration and marvellous stability, we may reach to a deeper thought of the infinite knowledge of God. When we trace the course of human

affairs in all their complexity, and note the trivial incidents which proved so momentous on the destiny of races or the rise of Empires, we may see, as we gaze from afar, how the Will of God rides on in majesty. Or, when we admire the grandeur of some great discovery, or some beautiful creation of poetic genius, we may find a new revelation of the glory of God, Who has given such gifts to men.

For those who can thus consecrate the intellect and find Him in all they learn, there is a great reward. There may be times with all of us when interest flags, and much study becomes a weariness to the flesh, and it seems so dull and stale and unprofitable, and none of the familiar objects of ambition will rouse us ; we have proved them, perhaps, and found them vanity ; but still there is a more excellent way. It has been well said that all art is the expression of man's delight in God's work ; and our studies may be redeemed from all that renders them monotonous and sordid, if we have trained ourselves to find, at each step in advance, a new expression of the infinite wisdom of God.





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